THE

Modern Couple,

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF

Mr. and Mrs. DAVERS.

In a SERIES of LETTERS.

DUBLIN:

Printed by and for J. A. HUSBAND,
No. 28, ABBEY-STREET. M.DCC.LXXVI.

MUSEUM BRITISH

INTRODUCTION.

AMong the married Ladies of the preſent age, eſpecially in the *gay world*, too many are inclined to think--- if we may be allowed to gueſs at their *thoughts* by their *actions*---that *inconſtancy* is a very pardonable failing, and that they

they may hold their marriage vows extremely cheap as ſoon as their huſbands have infringed them.---But though ſome married women receive very great provocations from thoſe to whom they are indiſſolubly united, they cannot, certainly, wander from the paths of *conjugal virtue*, without meriting the ſevereſt reprehenſions, becauſe *their* gallantries are, frequently, attended with the moſt unhappy conſequences. It is highly incumbent on a woman, for many reaſons too nume-

numerous to be mentioned in this place, to be faithfully attached to the man who has married her; but ſurely *that* man is unreaſonable who expects his wife to obey laws to which he himſelf bids defiance, after having ſolemnly ſworn never to violate them.---The infidelities of a huſband, and thoſe of a wife, are not, indeed, to be conſidered in the ſame light, becauſe reaſon as well as cuſtom has made a ſtriking difference with regard to the breaches in the nuptial contract

tract by the two ſexes: but as it is the *true intereſt* of every married couple to preſerve that contract unbroken, each of them ought to look upon conſtancy as the moſt ſolid foundation of domeſtic felicity.

THE

THE MODERN COUPLE.

LETTER I.

EDWARD DAVERS, Eſq; to ARCHIBALD HEPBURNE, Eſq;

I AM in love, Hepburne—I tell you ſo to account for my long ſilence. You will call me paradoxical, but, in truth, I am not like the majority of your amorous fellows, addicted to ſcribbling. However, in my preſent ſituation, I cannot help throwing out ſome of my private thoughts to you upon paper. Yes, Hepburne, I am in love, and in a very perplexed condition. If I fix *here*, I muſt *marry*, for my favourite is under the care of a father and mother who would, I'll lay any

wager, think themſelves very meritoriouſly employed in yoking their daughter with the moſt debauched and diſtempered old fellow in the kingdom, if he could make a large ſettlement upon her, totally regardleſs of her averſion to him, and turn the poor thing out of doors if ſhe ſhould be unable to reſiſt the warm addreſſes of a bewitching young fellow, before the parſon of the pariſh has ſanctified them. But this by the by—I don't intend to make any more reflections upon the Oſwalds. I am charmed with Lucy—She is young, handſome, and innocent. By the harmony of her features, the elegance of her form, and the ſimplicity of her manners, ſhe has taken entire poſſeſſion of my heart. I have often imagined I was in love; and I have often been miſtaken. I now feel the tender paſſion indiſputably. I am attached to Lucy Oſwald: my heart throbs for *her* alone. I cannot, I find, have her upon my own terms. I am willing, however, to take her on leſs eligible ones, becauſe ſhe has really made herſelf neceſſary to my happineſs. She has no fortune—Well—Gratitude will give a brilliancy to her affection, and fix her more firmly mine. If I may believe the little trifler, ſhe is quite unacquainted with the moſt delicious of all paſſions; but I fancy the dear creature *fibs*, for I think I caught her eyes rivetted on mine, when ſhe imagined

imagined I did not obſerve her, in a manner which diſcovered no *horror* at the ſight of me. I never ſaw them wandering after any other man. She has been rather *kept up*. Oſwald lives chiefly in Berkſhire: his family is always there. The girls though the have lived in a retired way, have been well educated: they are not high-bred, nor is their behaviour inelegant: they will make admirable wives; they are neither ready to run headlong into every faſhionable folly, nor yet ſo aukward as to be unable to do the honours of the politeſt table. When I am ſure that Lucy loves me I ſhall be *honourably* at her ſervice. I would not marry a *Venus* prepoſſeſſed in favour of another man.

Here is a very fine fellow who perpetually throws himſelf in the way of the *amiable ſiſters*, and ſeems to prefer *my* girl too. I have watched Lucy very cloſely, and ſee nothing like an inclination in her for him. I hope, therefore, that I have no reaſon to be alarmed about her.

LETTER II.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

WHAT a multitude of queſtions have you aſked, me, Nancy, about Mr. Davers! Many more, indeed, than I can anſwer, at preſent; and yet, I believed you have gueſſ-

ed right: he has addreſſed a great many fine ſpeeches to me, and has urged me to make replies to them in the ſame ſtrain. This very morning, being ſtrongly importuned by him to ſay ſome encouraging things to him, I told him, that without my father's approbation, I muſt be ſilent. He called me "ſweet, dutiful girl," and deſired to know whether my father's conſent would be accompanied with mine. I will not tell you my anſwer, Nancy—Indeed I believe I have forgot it; but I will tell you, that if my father ſhould command me to liſten to Mr. Davers, I ſhall be an *obedient* daughter. One feels very agreeable emotions when our inclination and our duty go together. I have been early taught obedience, you know, my dear: were I to reject Mr. Davers, my father and mother would be exceedingly angry with me; and, to be ſincere, I have not yet ſeen a man ſo pleaſing. However—ſhall I confeſs the truth? His principal charm is, in my opinion, his attachment to me. 'Tis impoſſible to *beat* an agreeable man, who ſeems to prefer one to every other woman, and who ſpends the greateſt part of his time in ſtudying new ways to entertain one. But I will ſtop here, leſt you ſhould ſay I have written too much. Beſides, I have not leiſure to write any more.

LETTER

LETTER III.

From the Same to the Same.

YOU tell me, that I find Mr. Davers amiable rather from gratitude than from love! It may be ſo. I have a very large ſhare of gratitude in my conſtitution. I could never indure, nor even attempt to diſoblige any perſon, who, I had reaſon to believe, eſteemed me; and I fancy, I ſhould be ſtrongly tempted to *love* the moſt diſagreeable creature, who was perpetually employed to give me pleaſure. I cannot help fondling dogs, birds, and other animals, however troubleſome, if they ſeem to have a ſort of an affection for me. This is my diſpoſition, Nancy, and I cannot change it. If Mr. Davers, therefore continues ſo aſſidious about me, ſo attentive to me, ſo deſirous to amuſe me and to make me happy, he may mould me into what ſhape he pleaſes. But take notice, my dear, I ſhould not have made ſo free a confeſſion, if every thing had not been ſettled between my father and my lover.

Mr. Davers has juſt been here. He ſaw me writing, and looked as if he wiſhed to know to whom; but he ſaid nothing. Could I refuſe to gratify his curioſity?—No—I glowed with ſhame, to think of the diſcovery he would make,

but I could not deny him a ſatisfaction to which he will ſoon be intitled; accordingly, I took up my letter and gave it him, without ſpeaking a ſyllable, and then hid my face with my hands.

"And ſo, my deareſt girl," ſaid he, pulling me to him, "you really love me and do not "conſent to make me happy, merely out of gra- "titude? Be aſſured, that I ſhall be ever ſoli- "citous to preſerve ſo amiable a heart, and to "increaſe thoſe tender ſenſations which you al- "ready feel on my account: and though I can- "not but eſteem the friend to whom this letter "is addreſſed, on *your* account, pray tell her, "that I ſhall be extremely jealous of her if ſhe "attempts to engroſs you to herſelf; tell her "alſo, that if ſhe will not be *my* friend as well "as yours, and communicate all your pretty ſe- "crets to me, I ſhall endeavour to put a ſtop to "a correſpondence between you."

I ſmiled and aſked him, "Whether it would "not be better worth his while to make *me* his "friend, as I certainly could inform him of "every thing which I committed to paper be- "fore it reached *you?*"

"Will you, my dear creature, ſhew me all "your letters to this Nancy?

"I don't ſay *all*, Mr. Davers; but you may "depend upon ſeeing every letter which may "afford any entertainment for you."

He

He thanked me ſeveral times, applauded the charming frankneſs of my behaviour, and appeared to be more delighted with me than ever.

Now, my valuable friend, you will plainly perceive that I muſt, for the future, write with great circumſpection. However as I have only promiſed to let him ſee thoſe letters, which will, in *my* opinion, entertain him, I may make what concealment I pleaſe. But away with deceit and double-dealing. A woman ought to keep no *important* ſecrets from her huſband. I ſhall be particularly cenſurable for keeping *ſuch* ſecrets from mine. Mr. Davers generouſly takes me without a farthing, and ſettles as much upon me as if I brought him a fortune equal to his eſtate. He has preſented ſome very valuable jewels to me. Here gratitude comes in, you will ſay, again—Well— let it be gratitude, let it be love—no matter—nice diſtinctions are ridiculous upon ſuch an occaſion. I own myſelf vanquiſhed. Davers is the ſole poſſeſſor of my heart. Yet, my dear Nancy, as he ſolicits *your* friendſhip, do not diſappoint nor chagrin him by the refuſal of it: be *his* friend, for *my* ſake: you will ſoon find yourſelf diſpoſed to eſteem him. I will not add, to love him, leſt I ſhould, in my turn, grow jealous.

LETTER IV.

Mr. DAVERS to Mr. HEPBURNE.

I AM married, and I am happy—What can I ſay more? And yet I could write, I could talk of my *Lucy* for ever. Were I indeed to deſcribe my Lucy's united charms, the beauties of her perſon, and the embelliſhments of her mind; her animated complexion, dimpling ſmiles, gloſſy treſſes, and love darting eyes, I ſhould make you enamoured with the portrait; and perhaps, though you have a moſt amiable wife of your own, long for the original.

You have often told me that there are exquiſite pleaſures in a domeſtic life, which mock all the powers of *deſcription*; pleaſures only to be *felt*, and I have often laughed at you for your conjugal effuſions; but I am now ready to throw out the ſame. In my Lucy's company I enjoy the higheſt happineſs; her temper is bewitching; I never met with a woman ſo thoroughly good-humoured. She is tremblingly alive to the tendereſt paſſions; and there is a delicacy in her manners beyond expreſſion. In ſhort, I am extravagantly in love. Come and ſee my angel; you will not then wonder at the warmth —not to ſay wildneſs— of my language about her.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Mr. DAVERS to Miſs ALLENSON.

Beechwood.

I OUGHT to make a thouſand apologies, my dear Nancy, for not having written to you before, but the great change in my ſituation, and my unavoidable engagements in conſequence of it will not permit me to write with my uſual frequency. I have not yet written even to my ſiſter, from whom I parted with much reget, though I have the ſincereſt eſteem for Mr. Davers, who was ſo obliging as to invite her to ſpend ſome time with us. Gladly would ſhe have accepted of his invitation; but my mother, though ſhe had ſo happily parted with *one* daughter, was afraid of truſting the other under her care. "When your ſiſter is married, my dear," ſaid ſhe to me, "ſhe may go wherever her huſ-"and pleaſes; but you know, Lucy, *you* ne-"ver left us till now."

I ſmiled and wept—I could not quit her—I have been ſo long accuſtomed to home, and to my mother's advice, that I am like a child, who, on its firſt going alone, totters at every ſtep, and trembles leſt it ſhould fall. Yet do not miſtake me, and imagine that I am not ſatisfied with my lot. Never was there a more amiable man than

Mr. Davers: he is exceſſively generous, tender, and ſtudious to pleaſe me; and while he *is* ſo, I muſt conclude that my conduct meets with his approbation.

I have been ſo perpetually in company ſince I came here, that I have ſcarce found leiſure to *think*. Every creature was new to me, and on my arrival a number of people came to *ſee* me—*literally*, as much as to *viſit* me—that is, came to *ſtare* at Mr. Davers's wife, to ſee what ſort of a woman he had married. As all my viſiters had their ſeveral ways of expreſſing their curioſity, I was obliged to put on a ſuitable behaviour to each of them. Mr. Davers tells me that I have pleaſed them all; but I fear he flatters me. I can't expect to behave in ſuch a manner as to be approved of by every perſon who comes to his houſe; however, while *he* is kind and obliging, I ſhall not be anxious about the applauſe of any other perſon: but though my chief ſtudy will be to deſerve the continuance of my huſband's affection, I ſhall endeavour to *merit* the eſteem of his friends.

Pray think of your promiſe, and make me a long viſit. Mr. Davers invites you alſo. He tells me, that all the amuſements at Beechwood ſhall be at *my* command, and at *yours*.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Mr. DAVERS to Mr. HEPBURNE.

Beechwood.

I HAVE brought my wife home, and am more and more ſatisfied with her every day. A young creature, who has lived in ſo retired a manner, and who has ſeen ſo little of the world, is very apt, when ſhe is thrown into an oppoſite ſtyle of life, to be guilty of improprieties and indiſcretions; but my Lucy is perfectly eaſy and prudently free in her carriage, and there never appears in her behaviour any aukwardneſs or affectation. She conducts herſelf with an incomparable decorum, delicacy, and addreſs. Every body is charmed with her innocent vivacity: even the women allow her to have merit: the men adore her. By the allowances of the *former* in her favour, it is very plain, that ſhe gives no encouragement to the freedoms of the latter. Naturally lively as my Lucy is, if her carriage was not particularly diſcreet, the envy, jealouſy and malice of her ſex would ſoon co-operate to blacken her character.

We have had all the neighbouring families round the country to congratulate us: many of my intimate friends too from London have viſited me upon my marriage. Every man thinks

me

me uncommonly fortunate. I am, indeed, Hepburne, a very happy fellow. To ſay truth, I was only deterred from matrimony by reflecting upon the great riſque which a man runs by taking a woman for life, who may prove falſe to him, or be ſo intoxicated with general admiration, as to pay very little regard to her huſband from whom ſhe muſt, neceſſarily, hear the ſame things over and over.

"So ſhe muſt from any other man."

True; but though the paſſion of love is pretty much the ſame in moſt men, lovers of different complexions have different modes of expreſſing their feelings, and ſome women are ſo prodigiouſly fond of variety, that they will liſten to new admirers, though the moſt dangerous fellows in the world. To my unſpeakable ſatisfaction Lucy is not of this turn: ſhe ſeems to be never ſo well pleaſed as when I am commending her for her unacceptionable conduct. I thought it beſt to throw her into company at once; for I have known girls, after having been long ſhut up like nuns, ſo captivated by a croud, as to be never eaſy, during the remainder of their lives without living in public. Beſides, there is a great deal, in my opinion, in bringing my Lucy among men while ſhe is in the height of her inclination for *me*. Not that I imagine ſhe will love me leſs than ſhe does at preſent, but time will

will, undoubtedly, make our tranſports ſubſide a little, and abate the violence of our raptures, without weakening our mutual affection. (Am I right in my proceedings?) She is ſo firmly attached to me, that ſhe receives, with the moſt petrifying indifference, all the fine ſpeeches which are addreſſed to her. I think, therefore that I may ſafely rely on her conjugal fidelity, and ſhall leave her to her own management.

We have a very agreeable party in the houſe: Lady Juliet Creſwell, Miſs. Pigot, and my brother. I had, you know, flirted ſo long with Lady Juliet, that the world gave her to me; but ſhe was the *laſt* woman to be thought of for a wife, and ſhe was not to be thought of in any other way. Yet I have not pitched upon *her* as a companion for Mrs. Davers, out of choice, I aſſure you: but as her ladyſhip's houſe is near mine, and has been repairing for ſome time, I could not politely refuſe to accommodate her with apartments at Beechwood, on her telling me how much ſhe was embarraſſed by the tedioufneſs of the workmen, the moment I informed her, that *my* houſe was at her ſervice till her own was ready to receive her, and that Mr. Davers and I ſhould be extremely glad of her company, ſhe took me at my word: ſhe is, therefore, now lodged here with her fair friend Sally Pigot.—But I muſt break off.—Lord Hythe is at the gate in his phaeton. Adieu.

LET-

LETTER VII.

Mrs. DAVERS to Miſs OSWALD.

I AM now going to keep my word with you, my dear Kitty, in giving you an account of ſome among the number of people with whom I have, within theſe few weeks, been acquainted.

I have already mentioned a Lady Juliet Creſwell, and her companion, a Miſs Pigot. You deſire a deſcription of them: are you not an unreaſonable girl? You cannot but ſuppoſe that I am continually engaged in entertaining my gueſts; beſides ſome time muſt be allotted to Love and my Davers. However, not entirely to diſappoint you, I will give you a few ſketches of the characters here. To begin with Lady Juliet — She is a tall, fair, elegant figure; ſhe has large, languiſhing, blue eyes; ſhe is ſenſible, polite, and inſinuating to a great degree; ſhe has been a widow about three years. Mr. Creſwell left her a good jointure, for the ſake of which, according to the chronicle of cenſoriouſneſs, ſhe married him: animated by no motives except mercenary ones.

Sally Piggot is a pretty, little melancholy thing, left at an early age, without a fortune or a friend: ſhe, therefore, conſented to be a companion to this lady.

We

We have here alſo Lord Hithe, a fine, tall, handſome man; ſenſible, good-natured, and perfectly well bred. The women make a great fuſs with him, but his behaviour to them is highly commendable, for he gives himſelf no airs: his carriage is quite free from inſolence or impertinence. He is the *Man of Faſhion*, without the leaſt daſh of the coxcomb in him.

Colonel Davers is alſo very agreeable and good-humoured.

And now, Kitty, you have all their characters chalked out: and you may eaſily imagine how we ſpend our time. Lady Juliet has engaged Mr. Davers to teach her to draw in water colours. The Colonel walks in the wood with pretty Sally, as he calls her, and gathers flowers for *me*, which they make up in *Bouquets*, while Lord Hithe reads to me, ſings to me, or plays upon the organ, *Piano-Forte*, or *Violencello*, in a maſterly manner. My voice is improved, I think. I attribute all my muſical improvements to the inſtructions which I receive from Mr. Davers, and from his Lordſhip. They tell me that my execution is *great*. I certainly wiſh to make myſelf every way agreeable to Mr. Davers, and I have ſo high an opinion of his judgment, that I am afraid I ſhall, in conſequence of his encomiums, grow a vain creature. He is too partial to me; but his partiality is a proof of his exceſſive love. I was

not

not very well ſome days ago; his care and tenderneſs exceeded all my expectations. I launched out in his praiſe—prompted at once by gratitude and affection—to Lady Juliet. "To be "ſure, Davers is a handſome fellow," replied ſhe, "every body muſt allow him to be ſo, but "when he is compared to Lord Hithe."

"No compariſon can fairly be made between "them, Lady Juliet," ſaid I, "but Mr. Davers's "behaviour to me would be ſufficiently endea-"ring, if he had a leſs pleaſing perſon, and if "his converſation was leſs engaging."

"Oh mighty well!" anſwered ſhe, ſmiling, "If Lord Hithe then was as *tender* in his beha-"viour, he would be loved as well."

"Fie, Lady Juliet, how can you ſuppoſe "that I ſhould think of loving any man but *him*, "to whom I am married?"

"Poor thing," replied ſhe, tapping me on the cheek, "you have not got rid of the "prejudices of the nurſery."

I ſtarted at this ſpeech, eſpecially as Lord Hythe heard part of it, and looked at me, as if he pitied my confuſion. I don't much like Lady Juliet; and yet as ſhe is Mr. Davers's acquaintance, I had rather not be obliged to diſcover any diſapprobation of her. When her houſe is finiſhed ſhe will leave us, I imagine, and while I am under the protection of my Davers, I need

not

not mind any body. However, I wiſh, Kitty, that my mother would let you ſtay with us a little; for when I am out of order, or over-fatigued, and am deſired to keep my room, I ſigh frequently for *your* company. Mr. Davers is more with me, upon thoſe occaſions, than I can expect him to be, as he has ſo many people to entertain, but many hours am I left to myſelf, and during thoſe hours, I earneſtly long for my deareſt Kitty's converſation. Pray let my mother know, that ſhe may truſt you with me, for Lord Hythe tells me, I am quite a matron.

LETTER VIII.

From the Same to the Same.

I JUST ſnatch a moment to inform you, that we are going in a large party to Brighthelmſtone. Mr. Davers has ſettled our *route*. Seeing me look grave on hearing he was to go in Lady Juliet's carriage, he preſſed my hand—"Don't "be ſerious, my Lucy," ſaid he, "we *muſt*, "you know, be ſeparated in the day time, but I "have taken care of you—Lord Hythe will "eſcort you; he is a good companion—Be "chearful, then, my ſweeteſt girl."

I made no oppoſition, Kitty, becauſe I cannot bear to ſhew any diſlike to what Mr. Davers propoſes, but I could not help thinking, when he left me,

me, of the extreme folly of thoſe people who are deſirous of ſeparating a married pair, who have preferred each other to all the world. If Mr. Davers had not loved me better than any other woman, he would not have made me his wife, I ſuppoſe. Why then muſt it be neceſſary for him to leave me, on ſuch occaſions as theſe, merely becauſe he has married me? How many unhappy marriages may be attributed to the abſurd cuſtoms eſtabliſhed by that tyrant, FASHION! But I have not time to expatiate upon this ſubject, though I have a great deal to ſay upon it.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

From the Same to the Same.

I HAD, as Mr. Davers ſaid I ſhould have, a very agreeable journey. Lord Hythe was ſo aſſiduous to make every thing eaſy to me, and ſo attentive to pleaſe me, that had he been but Davers, I ſhould have been the happieſt of women. Davers was acting the ſame part with Lady Juliet. Poſſibly ſhe would have found more pleaſure in Lord Hythe's company, and would, willingly, have changed with me. I gave a ſtrong hint of that kind to my Lord—a little too abruptly, for he coloured, and looked diſconcerted. I was ſorry that I had behaved in ſo thoughtleſs

thoughtleſs a manner. To be ſure, I had no buſineſs to mention Lady Juliet, at leaſt, not in the way I did. I therefore coloured in my turn, and looked ſtill more fooliſh than his Lordſhip, who, from that moment, became extremely officious, hoping he had ſaid nothing to diſpleaſe me, and fearing that I was too much fatigued with the heat of the weather. In ſhort, he was ſo tireſomely ſolicitous about my health and ſpirits, that, in order to throw him out of his whining ſtrain, I ſtruck into a chearful converſation, and we became the beſt company in the world. But enough concerning myſelf—you naturally expect ſome account of the diverſions here, and you ſhall not be altogether diſappointed.

The diverſions here are very well conducted. Many genteel people are down, and almoſt every hour has its amuſement, ſo that time flies away imperceptibly. I have danced with Lord Hythe, or with a partner recommended by him, every ball night. Mr. Davers leaves me entirely to the protection of his friend; but as *he* ſeems to be ſatisfied with my conduct, I have no reaſon to be otherwiſe. Lord Hythe waits for me to give me an airing upon the Downs in his Whiſky.—I muſt haſten to conclude.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER X.

Mr. DAVERS to Mr. HEPBURNE.

Brighthelmſtone.

WE have been here above a fortnight; but perpetual engagements have prevented me from writing to you before, and I have now only time to tell you that I depend on ſeeing you at Beechwood in ten days at fartheſt. Lady Juliet will then be gone to her own houſe, and I ſhall have all proper accommodations for Mrs. Hepburne, yourſelf, and little Archy—remember I inſiſt upon your bringing *him*; he is to be a pattern for my boy. Surely no married man had ever ſo much reaſon to be ſatisfied with his wife as I have. She is univerſally admired, and yet conducts herſelf with a diſcretion not commonly met with in this licentious age, when almoſt every married woman acts as if ſhe thought matrimony an abſolution for all deviations from the line of honour. Thank heaven! *my* Lucy is of a different diſpoſition; doubly happy am I in finding her ſo unlike to the generality of her ſex; for I could not, I confeſs, tamely ſee my wife take unwarrantable liberties without laying any reſtraints upon her. Were men to exert themſelves a little more than they do when their wives ſhameleſsly violate their marriage-vows,

we

we ſhould not, I fancy, hear of ſo many ſeparations.

Here are ſome ladies of the *ſeparating turn*; but Lucy neither mixes in their parties, though very much ſolicited by them, nor joins in ſpreading every idle ſtory that is circulated among them. The woman who wiſhes to depreciate another in the eye of the world, can be urged only by *two* motives, and theſe are, both, in my opinion, indefenſible. She muſt either have an inordinate paſſion for babbling, or ſhe muſt be impelled by a conſciouſneſs of her own failings, to blacken every character around her, that her own may paſs unnoticed. Thoſe who dread the obſervation of the world, becauſe they feel that their actions will not ſtand a ſcrutiny, generally endeavour to divert it by all the arts in their power; but ſometimes by over-acting their parts, they make unintended diſcoveries, and appear ſtill more contemptible.

I cannot ſeal this without deſiring you again to remember to bring your ſon. I have long promiſed Mrs. Davers to let her ſee him, and a diſappointment at this juncture, may be attended with very diſagreeable conſequences, and occaſion much uneaſineſs to,

Your ſincere friend,

EDWARD DAVERS.

LET-

LETTER XI.

Mrs. DAVERS to Miſs OSWALD.

Beechwood.

WE are returned home, my Kitty, and my houſe ſeems a new place to me. Lady Juliet Creſwell is gone to *her* houſe, and has taken Miſs Pigot with her: Mr. and Mrs. Hepburne occupy *their* appartments. They are very amiable people, and appear to be truly happy in each other: the happineſs which they enjoy they communicate in a manner which does honour to themſelves, and gives great ſatisfaction to their friends. They are neither fulſomely fond of each other, nor fooliſhly aſhamed of diſcovering and confeſſing their mutual affection and mutual eſteem. They need not indeed be aſhamed of their behaviour, for there is a delicacy in it, peculiar to themſelves, which renders it highly pleaſing, and worthy of imitation.

Mrs. Hepburne is not a *beauty*, but I never ſaw, among all the handſome women I have met with, a more agreeable one. In Mr. Hepburne's countenance you behold at once good ſenſe, and good nature: and are, conſequently, prejudiced at firſt, in his favour. They brought their little ſon with them, at Mr. Davers's requeſt, a boy about four years old, quite a cupid. I have always

always had, you know, a ſtrong *penchant* for drawing. I have attempted to take a likeneſs of this lovely child, and to make him appear in the character of the above-mentioned beautiful deity. I have been rallied a good deal by our gueſts to whom Mr. Davers *would* againſt *my* inclination, ſhew it. Lady Juliet, who frequently viſits us, ſays, that I have "a conſiderable quantity of "courage" to venture to draw the god of love. Mr. Hepburne tells me that he will lay any wager I ſhall exhibit a living model of his boy very ſoon. Lord Hythe declares that I may well conquer all hearts, when I can produce cupids with a few ſtrokes of my pencil; he has earneſtly deſired a copy, but you cannot imagine that I have complied with his requeſt. In ſhort, I have been ſo diſconcerted with compliments upon the occaſion, that I begin to wiſh I had not ſo *courageouſly* attempted to make the above-mentioned drawing; however, as Mr. Davers ſeems to be extremely pleaſed with it, I do not repent of what I have done; nothing would I leave *undone* to give *him* the ſlighteſt ſatisfaction. Yet, I think, Kitty, that Mr Davers does not love me as well as he did: I mean, he is not ſo fond of me as he uſed to be. Perhaps I only indulge an idle fancy; perhaps the affection of a huſband is naturally weakened by time—I hope I was never *too* fond of Mr. Davers: my love for him is certainly

tainly not abated—I don't know what to think—I may be wrong—I find I know very little of the world, tho' I meet with people every day who would *improve* me. Indeed, Kitty, by what diſcoveries I can make I ſhould not be the better for my faſhionable knowledge. The Hepburnes, I think, have juſt as much knowledge of the world as is neceſſary, and no more. They are too firmly attached to each other to be *talked* out of their domeſtic happineſs, and they behave with ſo charming a propriety, that they are generally ſpoken of in favourable terms, even by thoſe who wiſh to ſee their felicity interrupted. I never ſaw two people more amiable—I love them; but I alſo, *ſometimes*, envy them. I wiſh that Davers and myſelf were more like them than we are. When they are gone I ſhall try to prevail on my mother to ſpare you for a few weeks. There is ſomething ſo delightful in the chat of a friend, who is a ſecond ſelf, and who knows every ſecret of one's heart, that I ſhall not be eaſy till I have gained my point.

I have ſtrangely neglected our good Nancy Allenſon, whom I have alſo very much preſſed to give me her company, but ſhe, like my Kitty, is not her own miſtreſs. I do not know, indeed, how far it is proper for any of us to be left entirely to ourſelves. 'Tis hardly poſſible for human—and conſequently frail—creatures, with the

the beſt principles, and the moſt laudable intentions, to ſay how long they ſhall conduct themſelves in a reſpectable and commendable manner. For my own part I honeſtly confeſs that I have ſaid and done many things on which I could not reflect on afterwards without bluſhes, and ſelf-reproaches: I ſhould, therefore, be very glad always to have a friendly monitor by my ſide.

LETTER XII.

From the Same to the Same.

I HAVE received my mother's letter with the greateſt ſatisfaction, and have written to thank her for conſenting to let you be with me.

The Hepburnes leave us next week. Lord Hythe is gone for ten days; as ſoon as the Hepburnes return home, I ſhall ſet out to meet you—and I hope my mother will make me ſtill more happy by letting you go with us to London, to which place we ſhall proceed at the latter end of October, or beginning of November. I ſhould have been much concerned, as I foreſee I ſhall be much alone—if you had not gained permiſſion to come to me. Mr. Davers is often abroad, tho' he has company at his houſe, whom he leaves me to entertain.

"Whither does he go?"

Ay, that's the queſtion—a queſtion which, indeed, I cannot anſwer. I have ſometimes fancied that his viſits are to Lady Juliet; as I obſerved that he rarely was from home during *her* ſtay with us. Nay, he frequently tells me, he is going to her ladyſhip, but never aſks me to accompany him: and yet I never ſaw any thing particular in his behaviour to Lady Juliet: tho' I have many—many times thought that ſhe wanted to attach him to herſelf. He is certainly —I don't pretend to account for the alteration in him—he is certainly not the huſband he was to me—But tho' he does not favour me with his converſation ſo often as I wiſh to enjoy it, he ſeems to be as well pleaſed with me as ever: I go where I will, and I do what I will—yet, I chearfully ſubmit to a number of reſtrictions to have him with me as much as he was during the firſt three months after our marriage.

I ſhould be glad to know, Kitty, why men are more inconſtant than women—A woman, 'tis often obſerved, ſeldom changes if her huſband, or her lover, proves faithful to her. Now men are perpetually deſerting their miſtreſſes and their wives.

I ſhall be very ſorry to part with Mrs. Hepburne: I have known her but a little while, yet I feel a kind of affection for her: I am afraid, however, I ſhall have no opportunity to renew

our

our acquaintance, as ſhe is to be all the winter in the country; and when we return from London Mr. Hepburne is to meet us at Beechwood, while his lady goes to pay a viſit to her mother.

Mr. Davers talks of reſiding but *one* month in London after my recovering from my lying-in—if ever I *do* recover. I am very low-ſpirited, Kitty, juſt now; I cannot tell what is the matter with me.

Lady Juliet is alſo to remain in the country that I may not be without a good neighbour. What different meanings, my dear ſiſter, do different people fix to *thoſe* words! According to the ideas of *ſome*, a *good* neighbour is a moſt valuable acquiſition: *others* look upon a good neighbour as a torment—I am leſs violent in my deciſions: few people are *extremely* valuable, or *exceſſively* deteſtable—Lady Juliet does not merit the former, or the latter appellation—ſhe is a woman whom I cannot *love*, but neither can I *hate* her. I am, to ſay truth, rather *indifferent* about her: yet ſhe has, more than once, thrown me into a train of reflections on the uſes and abuſes of a neighbourhood. Were I not afraid of being two ſevere, I ſhould ſay that Mr. Davers rather preſumes too much upon the liberties her ladyſhip allows him, at her houſe, while I make not the leaſt advantage of them.

I am going to anſwer a long letter which I have received from Miſs Allenſon; tho' I am, ſometimes, tempted to ſtay till *you* come, and to get you to write for me. You are much more intimate with her than I ever was, and are, therefore, the properer perſon of the two.

I am interrupted—a new viſiter is arrived; a particular friend of Mr. Davers's whom I have not yet ſeen; a Mr. Shelburne: he is, I am told, a very amiable man.

Will not my brother accompany you? Pray tell him that I expect him.

Adieu, my dear Kitty, and believe me to be,

Your very affectionate ſiſter,

LUCY DAVERS.

LETTER XIII.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

Beechwood.

I HAVE been here a week, and have not found a ſingle moment to write to you. My time has been taken up in viewing this ſweet ſpot, and its beautiful *environs*. Lord Hythe and Mr. Shelburne have carried me to every place worth ſeeing: they are, both, Mr. Davers's friends, and agreeable men. My lord is, indeed, more than agreeable; I never ſaw ſo amiable a man There is a ſoftneſs in his manners, a gracefulneſs in his carriage, and a ſpirit in his converſation, which render him charming beyond expreſſion.

Mr.

Mr. Shelburne is reckoned very handſome, but he will never do after Lord Hythe. Lady Juliet Creſwell is a fine woman; my ſiſter will hardly allow her to be ſo, yet I begin to fancy ſhe will rob you of one of your admirers. *Charles* has been not a little noticed by her, and is, at preſent, her diſtinguiſhed favourite. Miſs Pigot has ſomething very pretty in her face, but ſhe is quite young, rather ſhort, and extremely melancholy. Her ſituation, I ſuppoſe, is not anſwerable to her wiſhes. I never heard her make any complaints about it, indeed; I only imagine that it muſt be diſagreeable enough to be ſubſevient to the caprices of a haughty woman of faſhion. However, why ſhould I ſuppoſe Lady Juliet to be *ſuch* a woman of faſhion? I never heard her charged with haughtineſs or caprice—I am too haſty. I mean that I ſhould not, myſelf, be happy in ſo dependent a ſtate—nor in any other but *that* in which I am at preſent placed.

When my ſiſter was married to Mr. Davers I thought her an enviable woman. I never was in love with her huſband, yet I did him juſtice whenever I mentioned him, and firmly believed that the woman who could love *him*, would be as happy as the marriage ſtate could make her. I now think, Nancy, that I ſee a great alteration in them both. Davers was extremely fond of your friend when I laſt ſaw them together; he

was not then hardly a moment from her; ſcarce could he eat, drink, or ſleep, ſo eagerly did he wiſh to look on her. If ſhe was abſent only half a quarter of an hour, he had no peace till ſhe appeared again, every thing ſhe ſaid, every thing ſhe did was, in the language of Milton, "Wiſeſt, virtuouſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt."—But the ſcene is changed—Mr. Davers is abroad for whole days. When he goes out in the morning, he takes his hat with a careleſs air, and faintly ſays, "Good-by Lucy." When he returns at night—if he returns at all—he cries with a tone of inſenſibility, generally with averted eyes, "So, my dear"—ſometimes only, "So child—"how do you do?" He then throws himſelf into a chair, aſks Lord Hythe and Mr. Shelburne how they have ſpent the day—adds, turning to me, "So, Kitty, where have *you* been?" and then calls "his *Pointer* to him, ſuffers the great dirty beaſt to lay her paws up in his lap, nay to lick his face, pats her ears, and aſks me "If I don't "think Chloe very handſome." Before I anſwer, he, probably, falls aſleep. Poor, dear Lucy! I pity her—What can have happened to make ſuch a change in a man who was once ſo agreeable? I look at *him*, and at Lord Hythe, and can hardly believe them to belong to the ſame ſpecies. And yet Davers was—oh no! he never was half ſo engaging as his amiable friend—Were *that* friend

friend married, perhaps, ay, and even to the woman of his choice, he might become ſuch another huſband.

Since my arrival here, I have often reflected upon the many ſeparations which have lately been going forward in the faſhionable world: many of the women have, I think, been blamed with two much ſeverity. Yet do not imagine, Nancy, that I want to frame any apologies for an indiſcreet wife. I only mean, that the indiſcretion of a wife may admit of *ſome* palliation when the behaviour of her huſband to her is uncommonly provoking: men can be very troubleſome, I ſee, when they chooſe to exert their teazing powers. Mr. Shelburne is extremely ſo; he follows me every where, and from a too great deſire to pleaſe, is really a tormenting creature. Lord Hythe, on the contrary, without taking any pains at all, is irreſiſtibly charming, and, if I may borrow a phraſe from the ſoldier's dictionary, takes our hearts by ſtorm. Don't run away with a notion now, that I prefer Lord Hythe to every other man. But I ſhall ſay ſomething preſently which will give you a ſtrange opinion of me, and put things into your head which you never would have thought of. I will, therefore, conclude while I have all my ſenſes about me.

Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

Mrs. DAVERS to Miſs ALLENSON.

I Have peeped over the latter part of Kitty's letter to my dear Miſs Allenſon, for ſhe would not let me me ſee the reſt, and confirm what ſhe has aſſerted, though not exactly in ſo many words.—Mr. Shelburne is in love with *her*, and *ſhe* with Lord Hythe; ſhe is unwilling to own it with her tongue; but her looks, her ſighs, her bluſhes, betray her. I pity her—I have no opinion of men juſt now—She has ſnatched my pen, and is going to diſavow all that I have ſaid. I aſked her ſeriouſly, whether ſhe could, with a ſafe conſcience, contradict me.—She hid her face with her hands, and ran away.—I will not, however, take advantage of her flight: I will ſay nothing more without her leave.——Beſides, I am half angry with you for not having made me your promiſed viſit. I ſhall expect you as ſoon as I return hither, and am ever

Affectionately your's,

L. DAVERS.

LET-

LETTER XV.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

I KNOW not what my ſiſter has communicated to you, Nancy: I believe, as I told you before, that I have talked too faſt—but I cannot recall my words. *You* were ever next to my ſiſter in my heart, and there are *ſome* things which I cannot now, without injuring her peace, diſcloſe to her.—Yet you are a little unreaſonable, my friend; for, in order to induce me to unboſom myſelf, you give me to underſtand, that you may, poſſibly, be tempted to divulge all that I have already mentioned, if I do not make farther diſcoveries—However, I feel ſo violent a propenſity to be communicative, that I *muſt* trouble you with my own affairs.—But I have other people to talk of as well as myſelf. Poor Charles is quite intoxicated with Lady Juliet; and ſhe ſeems, I think, to be no leſs fond of *him*. My ſiſter would not believe it a great while; ſhe now plainly ſees it, but does not approve of it. She has ever had a bad opinion of Lady Juliet; I cannot tell why—ſhe ſays, that Lady Juliet will only flirt with Charles and that ſhe is ſure her Ladyſhip is in love with a very different man. I, on the contrary, affirm, that ſhe is always ſending for him when he is away, and very par-

ticular to him when ſhe is here. They are perpetually ſitting cloſe together, or walking in an *affectionate* manner—May I not uſe *that* word, when I heard, that Lady Juliet commonly leans on Charles's arm and ſhoulder, and that they direct to each other, whiſpering, at the ſame time, moſt ſignificant looks? I confeſs I think that *ſhe* is more attached to *him*, than *he* is to *her*. Lucy ſhakes her head at all this, but time will ſhew who is in the right.

You wiſh me to be more minute in my deſcription of Lord Hythe, and Mr. Shelburne, you ſay. I believe I have written too much about the former, and I find no ſort of inclination to employ my pen concerning the latter—however, to oblige you—

Lord Hythe is tall, and elegantly made; he has the fineſt dark hair, and the moſt ſparkling eyes you ever ſaw. There is alſo the ſtrongeſt expreſſion of compaſſion and benevolence in his features to be imagined.

Mr. Shelburne is well made, and has a ſenſible face; he has fine eyes, but he appears to moſt advantage when he ſmiles, as his mouth and teeth are remarkably handſome; he is of a very ſerious turn, and is reckoned a man of an extraordinary character. In ſhort, one is more inclined to *eſteem* than to *love him*, and more tempted to *love* than *eſteem* Lord Hythe.

Here

Here are my two men—Now I know *whom* I ought, prudently, to prefer; but will *Fancy* be always under the guidance of *diſcretion?* Yet they are neither of them any thing to me. Lord Hythe's rank and fortune, and Mr. Shelburne's fortune, greatly ſuperior to his Lordſhip's, place them at too great a diſtance from me. It is not to be expected that I ſhould be ſo well married as Lucy. A marriage of generoſity, on the man's ſide, is to be claſſed among the diſintereſted proceedings which one meets with more frequently in books than in the world.

We go next month to London to be ready for my ſiſter's lying in, from which place you ſhall hear

From your's very ſincerely,

C. OSWALD.

LETTER XVI.

CHARLES SHELBURNE, Eſq; to ARCHIBALD HEPBURNE, Eſq.

I Don't know whether I ought to thank Davers for his invitation or not. I have been received with the warmeſt welcome; and his houſe, and, indeed, whole neighbourhood, are filled with agreeable people; but here is a little girl who ſeems diſpoſed to make me pay dear for the pleaſure I *have* received, or *ſhall* receive, at this place.

When

When you ſpoke, in high terms, of Mrs. Davers, you, certainly, had not ſeen, or did not think of her ſiſter. Poſſibly, ſhe did not ſtrike *you*; but, in *my* opinion, Kitty Oſwald infinitely excels her ſiſter. Mrs. Davers is, I will allow, the more majeſtic figure: ſhe has the moſt dignity in her appearance, and is, what is generally called, a regular *beauty*; but there is delicacy and elegance in Kitty's perſon and carriage which cannot be deſcribed—by that elegance and that delicacy ſhe firſt allures your eye, and then ſteals your heart. I admire Mrs. Davers, but I doat on Kitty: and then ſhe has a fine underſtanding—there is no confuſion in her ideas: her ſentiments, on every ſubject, are juſt, and happily delivered—her ſimplicity, and her modeſty are equal to her good ſenſe and her penetration: ſhe bluſhes at the praiſes which her merit excites; and by not appearing to be conſcious of her charms, either perſonal or intellectual, doubly deſerves every compliment ſhe receives. Her voice is melody itſelf—her *taſte* in ſinging, which *to me* is far beyond *execution*, is inchanting. But with all theſe ſhining accompliſhments, and a thouſand virtues, ſhe is unhappy—ſhe pines herſelf to death for a man who is exceſſively enamoured with her ſiſter. Poor girl! how ſenſibly do I feel for her!—I feel for them both, indeed. Davers does not behave as he

he ought to the lovely woman whom he has choſen for his wife—and his neglect may be attended with very diſagreeable conſequences. I pity both theſe young creatures: they ſeem to me, at preſent, marked out to be unfortunate, as they have both a great ſhare of ſenſibility, and are both formed to excite admiration. Women, eſpecially married women, who have a great deal of ſenſibility, and who are very much admired, are two often, by entanglements of a particular kind, rendered extremely miſerable, if they do not fall into good hands. I have *ſome* reaſon to fear that Mrs. Davers will be entangled to her ſorrow—ſhe is young; ſhe is ignorant of the world; and Lord Hythe is a *dangerous* man: however, I will be a ſincere friend to the two ſiſters—I will watch over them; I will be particularly attentive to the dear agreeable Kitty, and exert myſelf in her behalf, with the tenderneſs of a lover. The amiable ſiſters have alſo other accompliſhments which I highly approve of, as they ſerve to prevent the heavy complaints which thoſe are ever venting who are at a loſs to know what to do with their time—Idleneſs not only makes people contemptible, it often renders them criminal. Mrs. Davers and Kitty *draw* in a lively manner, but I wiſh that the latter would chuſe other ſubjects—--While Lord Hythe was reading to her ſiſter t'other day, I ſaw her make

the

the moſt maſterly ſketch of his face and air that I had ever beheld from a female hand. Lifting up her head, and perceiving me cloſe to her, for I was leaning upon her chair, ſhe ſtarted, bluſhed, and covered it with her hand. Nay, Kitty, ſaid I, do not attempt to conceal it: the ſubject, indeed, is not happily choſen, but the execution is exquiſite.

She bluſhed ſtill more—ſhe was almoſt ready to burſt into tears, and in a tremulous voice, begged me not to expoſe her. "Dear Mr, "Shelburne"—The word "dear" immediately turned me from my purpoſe—I quitted the paper which I had ſeized—"What will you give me," ſaid I, "to keep your ſecret?"

"I have nothing to give you," replied ſhe mournfully, "I am poor in every thing: only "ſpare me—O ſpare me, dear Mr. Shelburne."

That ſweet kind word again! Had ſhe uttered it with a heart beating in *my* favour, I ſhould have adored her, but as I well knew that it was only articulated in order to purchaſe my ſecrecy, I ſtopped—I heſitated—"If I keep your "counſel," ſaid I, "ought I not to be, in ſome "ſhape rewarded?"

"Is Mr. Shelburne then a mercenary man?"

"No, Miſs Oſwald; but you ſhould conſider "me—I really cannot hold my tongue, unleſs "you will permit me to have a kiſs: and a ſingle

"kiſs

"kiſs is a very inadequate reward—I am fairly "intitled to a dozen."

"O! you unconſcionable!" cried the ſweet creature—"Well, but you would not take it "here?"

"No—the more private, the more plea- "ſing; all ſtolen pleaſures are delicious, you "know."

The dear girl looked abaſhed, but inſtantly conveyed away her drawing, and kept out of my ſight for the remainder of the evening—We met, at laſt, however, though not by ourſelves—I whiſpered her as ſhe tripped by me, "How well you keep your promiſe, Madam!"

"Spare me, dear Mr. Shelburne."

Dear again! Does ſhe know what ſhe is about by making uſe of ſo bewitching an expreſſion? She will encourage me to fancy that I am really *dear* to her.

"I cannot, will not ſpare you any longer," ſaid I—Then catching her in my arms, I raviſhed the ſweeteſt of all kiſſes, telling her companion, that I had won a wager, and had been receiving the forfeit.

She ſtruggled and bluſhed, more from anger than ſhame; ſhe frowned; but her frowns were not abſolutely *killing*: I recovered and ſhe forgave me cordially—yet I am afraid that the apprehenſions of a diſcovery made her ſubmit to the

the terms of accommodation between us. She has, ſince, looked very cool upon me, indeed. She has alſo been reſerved in her behaviour to Hythe, who, though in love with her ſiſter is extremely obliging to *her*: *ſhe* endeavours to conceal her partiality for *him*, but it every now and then breaks out in ſpite of all circumſpection. He either does not, or pretends not to ſee it, but attaches himſelf ſo cloſely to Mrs. Davers that I fear ſhe will, in time, be tempted, if her huſband continues his neglect to her, to make repriſals by encouraging Lord Hythe's *douceurs*—But how meanly how unlike a man of honour does *he* act, by taking meaſures to corrupt the wife of his friend, when he might be bleſt with the affections of one of the loveſieſt girls in the world! There is no diſputing taſte, you will tell me—perhaps not. Is there, however, no woman, except a married one, who can pleaſe him? Cannot he exiſt without ſeducing the wife of the man whom he profeſſes to love as a brother?—What a ſcandalous way of proceeding is this! What has not ſuch a fellow to anſwer for!—Mrs. Davers has, I grant, conſiderable provocations, but I will venture any ſum, that ſhe would not be looking out for a man to ſupply the place of her huſband, did not this inſinuating rogue throw himſelf, perpetually, in her way. He ſhall not

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gain his point, if I can help it. I will ſave her, if poſſible, for her own ſake, for the ſake of her charming ſiſter, and even for Davers's ſake, though he little deſerves the wife I wiſh him. Am I not in a ſituation which requires ſome addreſs?

Adieu.

LETTER XVII.

From the Same to the Same.

AND ſo you have been laughing at me, Hepburne? Let me tell you, I am not a little hurt by your merriment—I expected a different behaviour from my ſober friend, who has ever been ſo ſtrenuous an advocate for domeſtick happineſs—But I ſee what diverts you ſo much—You ſmile, you ſay, at exclaiming ſo vehemently againſt Lord Hythe's paſſion for Mrs. Davers, who ought to be devoted to another, while I own myſelf extravagantly fond of her ſiſter, who is evidently partial to his Lordſhip—I *am* extravagantly fond of that ſiſter; yet ſurely there is a wide difference between a purſuit after a married woman, and a prepoſſeſſion in favour of one under no poſitive engagements to any man. I ſee what you would be at: you think that I am too ſevere upon Lord Hythe, as I am not, at the ſame time, able to controul

controul my own paſſion—Hear me, however: were I ever ſo little inclined to behold the wife of my friend with deſiring eyes, I would ſooner periſh than take any ſteps towards the completion of any illegal wiſhes; even though ſhe was the only woman in the world whom I could love—I will never ſacrifice honour to inclination. I could not, indeed, love *ſuch* a woman long: for love is a paſſion which impels us to ſeek for a return of tenderneſs; it is alſo a paſſion which cannot long ſubſiſt without eſteem—Were I enamoured with Mrs. Davers, I ſhould naturally endeavour to make her enamoured with me, and on being ſucceſsful, I ſhould certainly hold her in the greateſt contempt—and conſequently my affection for her would be of a very ſhort continuence. If married women would think more in this way, they would be leſs ready to make repriſals, as they may depend upon loſing the hearts of their lovers by the very means by which they fooliſhly hope to keep them. Now with regard to *my* paſſion for Kitty Ofwald, it is virtuous, and therefore laudable—as ſhe is free from any engagement I am at liberty to addreſs her; and as ſhe is but too much diſpoſed to fix her affections upon a man who, from his want of tenderneſs for her, and ſtill more from his deſigns upon her ſiſter, is unworthy of her, it is commendable, I think, in

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me to endeavour to work a change in her ſo much to her advantage—I will never looſe ſight of her till this event is brought about, or till ſhe is engaged to a more virtuous and deſerving man than Hythe, with her own approbation. I will be her *Friend*, if ſhe will not let me be her *lover*; and time, perhaps, may occaſion a turn in my favour which I do not, at preſent, expect. Aſſiduity, tenderneſs, and reſpect, may do a great deal—You ſmile again—Perhaps at the *laſt* word and think that the melting kiſs for which I bargained does not quite accord with the deference to which I pretend. But as you have been in love, yourſelf, Hepburne—nay, and are ſo ſtill, or I ſhould be ſorry for you ſweet wife's ſake——you *muſt* know that in the ſlighteſt commerce between the ſexes—even between two people rather indifferent to each other—ſome ſparks of tenderneſs will be mutually emitted, and thoſe ſparks, frequently, excited, rarely fail to kindle a mutual flame—If *I* do not inſpire Kitty Oſwald with a paſſion fervent as my own, how miſerable will be my ſituation! I actually doat on her—yes—I will not hide the inmoſt feelings of my heart from you—I doat on her—I gaze at her all day till I am ſcarce able to diſcern any other object—I hang over her chair till I am ready to drop: all my nerves tremble whenever I accidentally touch her

her—How could I reſtrain myſelf from ſeizing that delicious kiſs when the opportunity was ſo favourable? But then, as we naturally dread to offend the object we adore, you will no longer wonder that I ſnatched the bleſſing with a humility equal to the rapture which I felt upon the animating occaſion. No — Hepburne — though I languiſh to have the darling Kitty in my poſſeſſion; I love her too ſincerely not to prize *her* peace far beyond my own—Were Hythe really worthy of her, I would readily take every method in my power to make him ſee her exceſſive partiality in his favour; but the man who takes ſuch pains to recommend himſelf to Mrs. Davers can never deſerve her lovely ſiſter—I will, therefore, make uſe of every honourable art to render myſelf agreeable in her eyes.—Should I ſucceed after all!—What tranſports!—Should I be unſucceſsful, I will, however, watch over her with the ſolicitude of the warmeſt lover, with the anxiety of the fondeſt friend: and if I cannot make her happy myſelf, I will, at leaſt, do all I can to prevent her from being unhappy with another.

The brother of theſe charming women is a fine young fellow, but he ſeems to be following his inclination too eagerly: they are all three amiable in their manners, but they may be led into numberleſs errors by their quick ſenſibility

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if it is not under proper regulations: and yet a heart, which can only beat at the call of reaſon, muſt be but half animated—No generous actions can be expected from people with *ſuch* hearts—To have warm paſſions, and to have thoſe paſſions governed by diſcretion, is to be enviable indeed. The dear girl whom I ſo much admire, is, I flatter myſelf, ſuſceptible of the tendereſt emotions, and at the ſame time exemplarily diſcreet—I hope I am not miſtaken in her—Having ſtudied the ſex a good deal I reckon upon my penetration.—You will call me a preſuming fellow—call me what you pleaſe—Whether I am deceived or no, with regard to Miſs Oſwald, I ſhall, you may be aſſured, ever remain

Your very ſincere Friend,
CHARLES SHELBURNE.

LETTER XVIII.

From the Same to the Same.

AYE—now you take me right—I thought you only rallied me before—I imagined, indeed, that I was too well acquainted with my friend's heart to be miſtaken.

I agree entirely with you in believing that Mrs. Davers will not intentionally act in a criminal manner; but if her huſband becomes more

more negligent and indifferent, and if her pretty fellow grows more tender and preſſing, in what a dangerous ſituation will her heart be; and how very blameable is Davers for his imprudent expoſure of that heart! Hythe has very inſinuating powers, he is maſter of all thoſe "ſoft "parts of converſation," as Othello calls them, by which the generality of the fair ſex are deluded out of their ſenſes; and I am ſincerely afraid that he will be irreſiſtible in the eyes of Mrs. Davers. *His* attentions oppoſed to the careleſsneſs of her huſband will certainly give him conſiderable advantages over her: advantages of which he will, moſt probably, avail himſelf.

I have often thought, that matrimonial miſunderſtandings are more frequently occaſioned by an improper behaviour on the *huſband*'s ſide, than by an indiſcreet carriage on the ſide of the wife. Were men, in general, to treat thoſe women, whom they ſelect for their wives, with more equality before and after marriage, the happineſs of them both would be promoted. Thoſe who treat women as if they were goddeſſes before marriage are too often apt to degenerate afterwards into *Tyrants*, or *Inſenſibles*: to uſe them ill, or to deſert them—When a poor girl has been called angel, and adorable creature by her lover, ſhe is not a little diſappointed to find all the *cæleſtial Language* laid aſide, as ſoon

ſoon as ſhe has put him into the poſſeſſion of her perſon. Diſappointment is naturally ſucceeded by diſguſt: a *diſguſted* wife will, aſſuredly, look out for a man more to her taſte—and whenever ſuch a man comes in her way, her virtue will, I am afraid, be in a tottering condition---Nothing, perhaps, can ſave a woman's conjugal credit in ſo tempting a ſituation, but a conſtitutional coldneſs. I would, therefore, adviſe a man never to marry till he thinks he can keep up a uniform carriage in the character of a huſband: to be romantically fond of your wife to-day, and to treat her as if you had no connection with her to-morrow, is to make yourſelf appear to her in a very contemptible light, and to encourage her to think that conſtancy and conſiſtency, on her ſide, may very well be diſpenſed with. Davers has behaved with much indiſcreetneſs; I cannot tell whether he has any new attachment, but he is, indiſputably, weary of his wife—for the preſent, at leaſt. Hythe redoubles his aſſiduities about her: they may not, perhaps, prove ſucceſsful; but, they are evidently received with ſatisfaction, to the no ſmall mortification of poor Kitty, who cannot be blind to his attractions; and who, while *He* is entirely taken up with making his court to her ſiſter, ſits like the image of deſpair, ſilent, and attentive to his every look, his every motion,

motion, and perfectly regardleſs of every other perſon.

We were all at the canal, t'other morning; Hythe, and Mrs. Davers amuſed themſelves with angling; Kitty and I looked on—I ſtrove, indeed, to engage Miſs Oſwald's attention to a book which I had taken out of my pocket, but ſhe could not draw her eyes from her companions; ſhe ſat leaning, and diligently obſerved all their motions. Finding that Hythe was very buſy in aſſiſting Mrs. Davers to diſentangle her line, and ſeeing their fingers frequently meet, ſeeing alſo ſeveral particular glances between them, ſhe ſaid, at length to me, "I beg your "pardon, Mr. Shelburne, but I was not at- "tending juſt then to what you read; be ſo "kind as to read *that* paſſage once more." I complied; before I had got half through it, Hythe, in giving the line a ſudden jerk almoſt drew Mrs. Davers off her ſeat, and immediately catched her in his arms to ſave her from falling into the water.

Kitty ſcreamed and turned pale—Mrs. Davers, bluſhing, haſtily withdrew herſelf from his arms.

Kitty's paleneſs was ſucceeded by a lively red: turning to me, ſhe ſaid, looking confuſed, and with a faultering voice, "I was afraid that "my ſiſter would have fallen into the canal."

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I made no anſwer: perceiving that ſhe was aſhamed of the little jealouſy which ſhe had diſcovered, and had even attempted to prevent ſuſpicion at the expence of truth. My ſilence and my looks, which are, you often tell me, as expreſſive as my words, convinced her, I ſuppoſe, that I ſaw into her deſign, for ſhe became doubly aſhamed of having deceived me, and appeared very thoughtful and uneaſy. Not being able to behold her unhappy, unconcerned, I deſired her, while we were returning home, to baniſh all her anxiety about the little diſcovery which ſhe had made of her ſentiments, as I ſhould, from that moment, forget it.

"You are very conſiderate, Sir," ſaid ſhe, trembling on my offering her my hand to help her in getting over a narrow bridge, "your kind "behaviour is not loſt upon me."

"Since you think me ſo conſiderate," replied I, "you may ſafely make me your confident: "be aſſured that I will not betray you. We "are not always able to conquer our paſſi- "ons immediately, but time, reflection, and the "aſſiſtance of a faithful friend may be of ſervice "to you—look on *me* as *that* friend, Miſs Oſ- "wald: I will aſk no other favour."

"Dare I truſt a man?" ſaid ſhe: "but its "needleſs to tell you what your penetrating eyes "have diſcovered."

"You own then that they have *ſome* power: "would they were like Lord Hythe's, capable "of inſpiring you with as tender a paſſion!"

"Oh! huſh!" cried ſhe, "is this your pro- "miſed ſecreſy?

"To *you* alone I mention this, my dear Kitty "—Nobody hears, nobody underſtands."

She ſighed and ſhook her head.

Poor dear girl! ſhe is abſolutely in love, diſtractedly in love with him. What can be done for her? *He* has no eyes but for Mrs. Davers. It would be fortunate for both the ſiſters if he could change the object of his paſſion. I ſwear to you, that extravagantly as I admire Kitty, could I but make Lord Hythe as ſenſible of her merit as I am, I would freely reſign all my hopes —You will ſay indeed that they are very ſmall—I mean, that I would actually endeavour to convince his Lordſhip of her partiality for him, if I could do it with the leaſt delicacy. I will, however, point out to him ſome of her ſtriking excellencies. I am extremely well qualified for ſuch an undertaking, as I have cloſely ſtudied the dear creature's rare virtues and ſhining accompliſhments. To procure happineſs for thoſe whom we love, is to procure for ourſelves the higheſt ſatisfaction. Is it poſſible for a man to give a ſtronger proof of his affection for the woman of his heart, than to promote *her* felicity with *him*

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in whoſe favour ſhe is prepoſſeſſed? If I can bring myſelf to act in this diſintereſted manner, Hepburne, I ſhall begin to think that I deſerve Miſs Oſwald.—Would *ſhe* but think me worthy of her!—I cannot preſume to expect ſuch a revolution in her mind.

Adieu.

LETTER XIX.

From the Same to the Same.

I Have carried my deſign into execution. Kitty gave me, accidently, a fair opportunity laſt night. We were all aſſembled in the muſic-room: the two charming ſiſters were at the organ: Mrs. Davers played: Kitty, leaning over the back of her chair, warbled out the moſt melting ſtrains.

Arne's Roſamond lay before Lucy, Kitty ſung, "Think on the ſoft, the tender fires." I never heard that favourite air of mine ſo pathetically performed. I was in an ecſtacy. I ſeized Lord Hythe by the arm, and drew him oppoſite to the ſweet ſongſtreſs—"Did you ever ſee ſuch "an angel," ſaid I, "did you ever hear ſuch "a melodious voice? Can you, poſſibly, be-"hold ſo charming a face without being enamour-"ed? Can you liſten to ſuch delicious ſounds

" without being in raptures? What expreſſion! " What taſte!"

He almoſt felt as *I* felt upon the tranſporting occaſion. He gazed on her with ſo much tenderneſs in his eyes, that ſhe glowed with delight; and on being *encored* by him, went through the air again with double ſpirit, and judiciouſly introduced ſeveral new graces.

A ſigh from Mrs. Davers broke the enchantment.

Hythe, inſtantly forgetting Kitty, flew to relieve her ſiſter; to enquire, at leaſt, into the cauſe of her ſorrow.

Kitty cloſed the book, and hurried out of the room.

The next day, Kitty was painting a landſcape in water-colours. It was an evening-piece. There was a beautiful ſetting ſun. Under the ſhade of ſome large trees in the foreground was placed a ſhepherd making up a noſegay for a ſhepherdeſs. At a little diſtance ſat a girl leaning on her crook, and looking at the ſhepherdeſs, as if ſhe envied her ſituation. There was ſo much expreſſion in the figures, though they were ſmall, and ſo much delicacy in the colouring, that I carried the picture to Lord Hythe, and aſked him if he could view it without admiring the ingenious deſigner.

He confeſſed it was a maſterly performance.

" And

"And has ſhe not alſo every charm to melt
"the ſoul to love? I am aſtoniſhed to ſee your
"Lordſhip ſo intimately acquainted with this
"fine young creature, and to ſee how ſmall an
"impreſſion ſhe makes on your heart. What
"an excellent wife will ſhe be!

"True," replied he dryly, "and therefore,
"I would adviſe *you*, Shelburne, to take her
"yourſelf; you are in love with her, I am
"ſure; why then do you recommend her to *me*?"

"For ſeveral reaſons," ſaid I. "In the firſt
"place, my Lord, I have ſo great an eſteem for
"Miſs Oſwald, that I would freely reſign all
"hopes of my own felicity to purchaſe *hers*:
"and as I am certain that ſhe prefers your
"Lordſhip to me, I would, on that account alone,
"yield her up. Secondly, I think your viſible at-
"tachment to her ſiſter may be productive of the
"moſt diſagreeable conſequences, not only to
"yourſelf, but to her; and if you really have
"the regard for her that you pretend to have,
"you will, perhaps, when it is too late, be
"ſorry for having gone ſo far. By marrying
"her ſiſter, who is no leſs amiable, and who
"would be ſtill more ſo, were ſhe addreſſed by
"the man of her choice, you will ſave yourſelf
"from a number of mortifying, and probably
"tormenting reflections. You are ſenſible, my
"Lord, continued I, ſeeing him look irreſolute,

"that I have made no falſe aſſertions, becauſe "I adviſe you entirely from diſintereſted motives. "My inclination revolts again my advice; but "I conſider only the emolument of a family who "may be greatly hurt or benefited by your con- "duct."

Here I ſtopped. It was ſome time before he replied. At laſt, warmly preſſing my hand, he ſaid, "I am thoroughly convinced, dear Shel- "burne, that what you have advanced is quite "conſiſtent with reaſon and honour, but paſſion "is ſometimes too powerful for both: had for- "tune permitted me to have ſeen Mrs. Davers "before her marriage, I ſhould have been the "happieſt of men, I ſhould have hoped, by my "aſſiduity to gain her heart: as ſhe is now ſitu- "ated, I dare not hope for ſuch felicity: I ought "not to entertain a thought of it. I languiſh "for her, it is true, but I prize her peace too "highly to injure her. However, though ſhe "is loſt to me, and though I think Miſs Oſwald "the next loveliеſt woman in the world, I fell "I do not yet deſerve the preference with which "ſhe honours me."

I could get no more out of him—You may eaſily imagine, that he will, under the dominion of his ruling paſſion, make no material change in his behaviour: however, my conſcience is at eaſe; I have informed him that he may be hap-

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py in the affections of the moſt amiable young creature, and that I ſee into his indiſcreet carriage with regard to her ſiſter. I could go no farther with any degree of prudence at that time; but I will continue to watch over my favourite Kitty with as much aſſiduity and ſolicitude as ever. I *am*, I *will* be her friend, and neglect nothing to promote *her* happineſs, and the happineſs of her family.

I have made another diſcovery—Kitty's brother will, I fancy, be a fortunate fellow, by marrying Lady Juliet Creſwell: her jointure, you know, is large, and by an œconomy, aſtoniſhing in a young woman of faſhion, ſhe muſt have made a conſiderable addition to it, as ſhe lives almoſt conſtantly in the country, and upon a plan which moſt women of her rank would think a mean one.

A few days ago I was witneſs to a very tender ſcene between Lady Juliet and her admirer. They were ſeated upon the trunk of a large tree in the thickeſt part of the wood belonging to her ladyſhip's eſtate. The youth had her hand in his, and was pouring out a number of fine ſpeeches. Drawing her hand away haſtily, but rather with reluctance, ſhe cried, "Be quiet, "Oſwald, I will not hear any more upon this "ſubject; have not I told you a thouſand "times—"

"Yes," replied he, "but your verbal pro-"hibitions will be quite ineffectual, while your "glowing beauties invite me to the preſſure "of thoſe delicious lips from which they fall."

Right language for a young widow, thought I, as I ſtood behind one of the broadeſt oaks in the plantation.

"Fie, Oſwald," anſwered ſhe, giving him a ſlight blow with her hand. The little pat was ſufficiently encouraging, and he immediately raviſhed a kiſs. For that freedom, indeed, he was ſeverely chidden, but his pardon was granted almoſt as ſoon as it was ſolicited, and he would, probably, have proceeded to another rape of the ſame kind, had not the ſound of approaching feet occaſioned their precipitate removal from the poſt of love. They hurried towards the houſe.

Mrs. Davers has no longer any reaſon to be jealous of Lady Juliet. Davers wherever he is, is not in purſuit of *her*; of no other woman, perhaps: ſhe ought not, therefore, to apologize for her own inconſtancy, by urging his deſertion. Should ſhe be tempted to act indiſcreetly, I will acquaint her with the diſcovery I have made, and endeavour to perſuade her that Davers is ſtill attached to *her* alone. When Hythe finds himſelf in a hopeleſs ſituation, and unable to gain the woman he loves, he may be glad to take her

her who loves *him*, as he is now aſſured by me that Kitty is *that* woman. Can I do more for the perſon about whoſe happineſs I ſo much intereſted myſelf?

P. S. I forgot to tell you, that Davers carries his wife and her ſiſter to London to-morrow. They are to remain there till a certain event is over. I ſhall not be in the houſe with them, but I ſhall be their near neighbour, and very attentive to all their motions.

LETTER XX.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

I Have been ſo continually *employed*, if I may uſe the expreſſion, ſince I came to London, in going from one place of amuſement to another, that I have had no leiſure to write; nor do I ſee any hope of ſitting down quietly to my pen, as there is always ſomething to engage my ears or my eyes. In ſhort, all the time *before* and *at* breakfaſt is taken up in converſation about what has paſſed, and what is to be expected. We then hurry out, and do but juſt return ſoon enough to dreſs. When we have dined, away we ſally forth again. I call this intolerable fatigue; but this is the life which is generally called a life of pleaſure; and few people *complain* of their *ennui*, whatever they *feel*. For

my part, I have no time to *think*. Mr. Shelburne tells me, that a little diſſipation will be of ſervice to me. I confeſs, I cannot comprehend the advantages reſulting from it. I am rather apprehenſive, that my head will be turned in ſuch a whirl of diverſion. I am ſurprized that a man of Mr. Shelburne's ſenſe, can be an advocate for a life of confuſion; but I have frequently obſerved, that men with the beſt underſtandings have very odd fancies. However, he attends us, that is, my ſiſter and me; and when *ſhe* is not well, accompanies me and Mrs. Johnſon to all the faſhionable amuſements. We are obliged to him, I think, for a man who is perfectly well acquainted with the cuſtoms at public places, and who has alſo taſte enough to point out every thing worthy of notice, is of conſiderable ſervice. Such a man is alſo highly ſerviceable by keeping idle, impertinent and inſolent fellows at a diſtance.

Lord Hythe too—I mention *him*, that you may not chide me for being inſincere—is frequently in our parties, but chiefly when my ſiſter is well enough to go abroad: when ſhe is indiſpoſed, he commonly contrives a little circle of particular friends at home for her. Don't think I am jealous, my dear, if I ſay, that I wiſh he was leſs eager, leſs ſtudious to pleaſe her: I am afraid, indeed, that his aſſiduities

ities may involve us all in unhappy ſituations: yet I hope I ſhall be miſtaken. I ought not to have ſaid ſo much; but to whom can I open my heart ſo properly, as to ſo intimate a friend, who has been ever ready to hear its ſecrets, and to keep them locked up in her own? If Mr. Davers would behave to my ſiſter as he did when he firſt married her, ſhe would not, I will venture to ſay, ſuffer Lord Hythe to be ſo aſſiduous about her. And yet, amiable as he is, I dare believe, that ſhe only encourages him with a view to recall Mr. Davers's affection. What a dangerous experiment! How frequently are ſuch trials productive of the moſt fatal conſequences! But I hope I ſhall be miſtaken. I hope alſo, that when we return to Beechwood, you will, in conſequence of my ſiſter's repeated invitations, come to us. You will then have an opportunity to ſee whether I am really ſo unhappy as to gueſs right, or whether I have been only tormenting myſelf with idle chimeras.

LETTER XXI.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

I AM happier, I think, in town, *near* Kitty, than when I was in the houſe with her at Beechwood; my happineſs is only to be accounted for by her behaviour; ſhe appears to be more

ſatisfied

ſatisfied with me; ſhe puts herſelf more immediately under my protection, and I eſcort her to all the public places. I walk with her in the Park in a morning; I wait on her to the opera and the play, and I dance with her at Almack's and Mrs. Cornely's; yet am I not a jot farther advanced in her favour as a lover, though ſhe does not ſeem unwilling to look upon me as a friend. I gaze on her for hours, with a tenderneſs not to be deſcribed; I read to her the moſt affecting love ſtories; I play to her the moſt melting airs; I ſigh, I tremble, I preſs her hands, to no purpoſe. She beholds me with the utmoſt coldneſs; ſhe beholds Lord Hythe, notwithſtanding his indifference, with the utmoſt delight: her *eyes* ſufficiently declare her immoveable attachment to him. Poor Kitty! how I pity her! My affection for her increaſes with my compaſſion. She ſees it, and does all in her power to conſole me, by diſcovering her eſteem for me. She feels nothing more; I muſt be, therefore, ſatisfied with her eſteem. But though I am not able to inſpire her with warmer ſentiments *another*, may be more ſucceſsful; *another* more fortunate may ſupplant even *Hythe*, and then it will be all over.

You enquire after your friend Davers; he is become more attached to his wife, I think, within theſe ten days, than he has appeared to be for

for ſometime: her *ſituation* requires his attention; it has long been conſidered by Lord Hythe in the moſt affectionate manner: yet his *conſiderate* carriage ſeems not either to offend Davers, or to alarm him: on the contrary, he never is ſo well pleaſed as when his Lordſhip is of their party, either in the card-room, muſic-gallery, or library; for, as Mrs. Davers cannot venture to many places — to no crowded ones — many hours muſt, neceſſarily, be ſpent at home.

Lord Hythe's behaviour to Mrs. Davers has hitherto, indeed, been ſo delicate, that the moſt ſuſpicious huſband could not well have received any uneaſineſs from it; but is not the Lady more in danger from ſuch a delicate behaviour, and will ſhe not be ſooner inclined to love a man, who, by his profound reſpect, and remarkable ſolicitude about her reputation, ſilently compels her to eſteem him, than her huſband, who by his careleſſneſs, indifference, and inconſtancy, leaves her expoſed to all that man's inſinuating arts? The open, the avowed libertine is not the dangerous lover — *him*, a woman who has any ideas of decency, will avoid, leſt her character ſhould be blighted by his approaches to her, as ſhe may rationally ſuſpect ſuch a lover of having diſhonourable views: but the ſoft, the gentle, the ſmooth-tongued pleader, frequently ſteals into the poſſeſſion of the heart of the unguarded female,

female, who liſtens to him, before ſhe has given herſelf time to think about him. Here is, in my humble opinion, a caſe in point. However, as your officious dealers in advice, ſometimes put things into the heads of thoſe who ſeem to ſtand in need of admonition, which never would have entered into them, I am ſilent, even to Kitty, who, though ſhe well knows that I am aſſured of her partiality to Hythe, never imagines, I believe, that I ſuſpect her ſiſter to be alſo ſenſible of his captivating powers.

In continuation.

We were at the play laſt night, the "Innocent Adultery." Kitty, by her charming ſenſibility, added to her other *agreemens*, ſo engroſſed Sir William Morley's attention, that I cannot anſwer for the conſequences. Morley is amiable, and I may be diſtanced for ever. I ſhall not dare even to aſpire to be her *Friend*, when ſhe has given her hand to another: I ſhall not dare to truſt myſelf near her when it will be criminal in me to wiſh her to look kindly on me. Were I as much enamoured with Mrs. Davers as Lord Hythe is, I would fly from her as I would from the plague. I always thought a man of profeſſed gallantry an infamous character. The man who loves but one woman, if

that

that woman has vowed fidelity to another, may *think* himſelf a worthy character compared with the man of intrigue; but he is a dupe to his own vanity. He who deſtroys the peace of *one* woman, who might have been virtuous if *he* had not thrown himſelf in her way, and ruins her reputation, is a greater villain than the vagrant libertine who has connections with a hundred proſtitutes.

LETTER XXII.

From the Same to the Same.

MORLEY makes formidable advances. Kitty is polite; but I have not yet had the misfortune to read *love* in her eyes for him. No; Hythe, Hythe alone has power to inſpire her heart with the tender paſſion.

Mrs. Davers is ſafely delivered of a daughter: her confinement neceſſarily deprives Hythe of her company. Kitty, therefore, ſupplies her place — in the *room* only — not in his *breaſt*. His civilities, however, his attentions, and his ſolicitude to pleaſe her on her ſiſters account, make the gentle girl quite ſatisfied with him.

Davers juſt now *acts* the *affectionate huſband*: ſhould he, upon his wife's recovery, be as fond of her as he was at firſt, Hythe may, perhaps, take Kitty. *She* flatters herſelf, at leaſt, that he

he will, and therefore leaves nothing undone to charm him. She has given him one of her drawings: ſhe ſings to him, and ſtudiouſly endeavours to amuſe him in the abſence of her ſiſter. I really think he *is* amuſed. Who can be deſtitute of amuſement when ſuch a fine young creature exhibits herſelf in every attractive point of view, and exerts all her powers of pleaſing. *Thoſe powers muſt* ſucceed at laſt. As Lord Hythe has a heart not void of ſenſibility, Kitty *muſt* be, when he has leiſure to attend to her attractions, irreſiſtible.

LETTER XXIII.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

MY ſiſter, my dear friend, has been brought-to-bed above a fortnight, of a daughter; the ſweeteſt little girl you ever ſaw. You may imagine that we all felt a great deal of joy at this happy event: happy it will, I hope, be in many reſpects. It has already, I think, revived my brother's tenderneſs; the revival of *his* tenderneſs makes my ſiſter the happieſt of women — She will now be ſo much taken up with her pretty infant, and Mr. Davers's returning affection, that her thoughts will moſt probably be confined to her huſband and her daughter. Lord Hythe appears to be ſenſible of this change

change in her ſituation, and I am in hopes, that every thing will go well. I am now ſorry for the hint which I dropped in my laſt letter. I ought not to have thrown out ſuch a hint to my ſincereſt friend; but diſcretion is not always at one's elbow to give one a twitch: I was low-ſpirited, and cauſeleſsly alarmed. Pray do not divulge my ſecret, my dear, to any creature breathing. I would even forget it myſelf. I cannot find leiſure to write a long letter at preſent. My time, you may ſuppoſe, is very little in my own power. When my ſiſter comes among her friends again you ſhall hear more from

Yours, as uſual,

C. OSWALD.

LETTER XXIV.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

POOR Kitty!—We are all undone again; and by the moſt unexpected accident—An accident which I could not poſſibly foreſee—The cauſe of it is ſtill among the *deſiderata* of curioſity.

We were in high glee celebrating Mrs. Davers's removal from her chamber. On a ſudden a letter was brought in by the ſervant to Davers. The ſuperſcription made him change colour: he opened it, looked diſconcerted, roſe, walked

up

up and down the room, violently agitated, and ſoon afterwards ſaid to his wife, with an embarraſſed air, "I muſt leave you to-morrow, Lucy; "I muſt go to Beechwood."

"You need not leave me," replied ſhe with a compliant ſmile, "I am ready to attend you "if you will accept of my company."

There was ſomething, I thought, remarkably pleaſing in her voice and manner: ſubmiſſion and tenderneſs ſeemed to be happily blended in her looks and accents: but the *huſband* was of a different opinion. He told her ſhe was not ſufficiently recovered to venture into the country at that time of year; but he ſpoke not to her with the inquietude of a man who was concerned about her health; he rather made a haſty reply, as if he wiſhed to get rid of her. She *felt* the *unkindneſs* of his anſwer, ariſing from the *expreſſion* in his looks, and the *tone* of his voice, for it was, *verbally*, an affectionate one. She bluſhed for him, and ſilently ſubmitted. Hythe ſaw her uneaſineſs with ſympathizing eyes, and ſighed. Kitty echoed all his ſighs. Morley, who has been her conſtant attendant, evidently conceived hopes of her from that moment; and *I*, merely as a friend, was ſorry for them all.

I have long believed that Davers has ſome attachment abroad. His wife apparently ſuſpected him, and felt her regard for him weakened: his

anxiety

anxiety about her, during her lying-in, re-kindled the tendereſt emotions in his favour: I wiſh that this ſudden change in *him* may not make an alteration in *her*. The compaſſion of ſuch a handſome fellow as Hythe is very ſeducing. May ſhe have ſtrength enough to ſtifle any improper prepoſſeſſions! Morley, who appears to have a good deal of diſcernment, has, I am certain, diſcovered all their different ſenſations, and he has hopes of Kitty, meerly becauſe he ſees that ſhe has no proſpect of making an impreſſion upon Hythe's heart. As things are thus circumſtanced, am I not, every way, *ſtung?*

LETTER XXV.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

NEVER marry, Nancy, unleſs you are ſure of keeping your huſband's heart; and where is the woman who can preſume to have ſo much power? Poor Lucy is no longer able to conceal her ſorrow. Mr. Davers—I cannot juſt now bring myſelf to call him brother—ſet out this morning for Beechwood. Imagining that my ſiſter would be rather low-ſpirited, I ſtepped into her dreſſing-room—I found her bathed in tears.

"My dear ſiſter, what is the matter?" ſaid I. "Is the child ſick?"

"No,

"No, my dear," replied ſhe, with a diſconcerted air, "but I am not well; do leave me, "Kitty—I ſhall be better by and by."

"I cannot leave you, indeed," anſwered I, "for I am afraid that you have ſome reaſon to "weep."

She fetched a deep ſigh, and, with a ſignificant look, ſaid, "Oh Kitty!—Kitty!—But "don't aſk me—"

"Nay, my dear ſiſter, I muſt not only aſk "you, I muſt be anſwered: grief is leſſened "when it is imparted to a friend."

"Mine is not of that nature—nothing can "alleviate it. Yet were it not my duty to con-"fine the cauſe of it to myſelf, I ſhould be "tempted, perhaps, to eaſe my full heart by "complaining to a friend."

Here a freſh ſhower of tears put a ſtop to utterance. Her tears and her ſilence affected me ſo much, that I inſiſted upon her telling me all her ſorrows; and in order to make her willing to inform me of what ſhe might ſuppoſe me to be ignorant, I ſaid, "You are uneaſy, no doubt, "at parting with my brother; but men, my "dear, are a little whimſical, you know, ſome-"times. A ſudden fancy to look after his hounds "or his horſes, &c. may have hurried him from "you juſt now, but I dare ſay he will ſoon re-

"turn,

"turn, and that you will have no more reaſon to "be anxious about him."

A heavy ſigh and a melancholy motion of the head convinced me that I had hit upon the real ſource of her affliction.

When ſhe had again given *ſome* eaſe to her heart by weeping, ſhe ſaid, "Oh Kitty, what "a cruel change is there in Mr. Davers! The "letter which he received laſt night, is, I am "ſure, from a miſtreſs; ay, and a favourite one "too. He has not ſpoken a kind word to me "ſince he read it. I flattered myſelf, that the "birth of my little Lucy had fixed him more "than ever to me; but I find I am miſer-"ably miſtaken. If he is weary of me *now*, "when I am in the full poſſeſſion of the few "perſonal attractions which caught his eye, "what years of indifference, what years of diſ-"guſt have I not reaſon to expect! Had I ima-"gined that Mr. Davers was of ſo fickle a diſpo-"ſion, I would have died rather than have mar-"ried him."

"I am afraid, ſiſter," replied I, "that men, "in general, are not more conſtant."

"'Tis a thouſand times better, then," ſaid ſhe, warmly, "for every woman to live ſingle. "Every woman with a tolerable perſon, has a "*few* years of youth, during which ſhe may, "probably, have power to pleaſe, and even

"when

"when the firſt bloom of her beauty is gone off, "ſhe may by her *manners* make herſelf agreeable "to ſomebody, if ſhe has neither a churliſh nor "a careleſs huſband to controul her. When "once a woman is married to a man who is in- "different to her, all the happineſs of her life is "at an end. She cannot, without violating her "marriage vow, recommend herſelf to the atten- "tion of any other man: ſhe muſt ſit down in a "corner diſregarded, and in vain pine after thoſe "pleaſures which happier women enjoy. No: "if a woman will run the riſque of marrying, "let her ſtay, at leaſt, till ſhe is advancing to- "wards the middle of life, that ſhe may not be "obliged to renounce its pleaſures as ſoon as ſhe "begins to have a reliſh for them."

I confeſs, my dear Nancy, I was ſorry to hear her talk in this manner. I have always, indeed, feared that moſt of the indiſcretions, committed of late by the married women, have been occa- ſioned by the cenſurable behaviour of their huſ- bands; but, certainly, the follies of a huſband cannot authorize thoſe of his wife: cannot in the leaſt apologize for them. A woman may wiſh, I grant, to exculpate herſelf, by pleading the prior criminal conduct of the man to whom ſhe has given her hand, but ſhe who throws away *her* reputation, becauſe her huſband is regardleſs of *his*, acts a very imprudent part.

In

In anſwer to my ſiſter's ſpeech againſt matrimony, I told her, "That I could not be of her "opinion. I cannot ſee what you would gain by "living ſingle," continued I, "and by receiving the addreſſes of a variety of lovers. 'Tis "better, I think, to fix the heart of one valuable man, than to flirt with a thouſand fellows; "and whatever you may fancy about lovers, "they are full as inconſtant as huſbands."

"Sometimes," replied ſhe, "but then you "have a chance to ſupply the place of a defer-"ter: when you are married, you are married "for ever: there is no relief for you but death."

"Now, that is what I like," ſaid I. If I "loved a man, I ſhould love him, I believe, al-"ways, and ſhould feel the greateſt pleaſure in "ſecuring him for ever and for aye."

"But that is a pleaſure no woman can poſſi-"bly enjoy. You may be tied to a man, and you "may be conſtant to him, but he will roam a-"bout as freely as if he had never married you."

"And ſo let him—I would lay no reſtraint "upon the inclination of the man I loved. If "he has once loved me, I will give him leave to "wander now and then; after a little abſence "he will return to me with new tranſports. Let "me aſk you a couple of queſtions, ſiſter. Were "you always confined to this chamber, wouldn't "you be quite ſick of it? When you have been

"gadding

"gadding about all day, or only ſitting from "morning to night below ſtairs, are you not glad "to get to your room again, and to remain in it "dreſſed or undreſſed, alone, or with a friend, "juſt as you pleaſe, without any fatigue or re-"ſtraint? Your huſband would be weary of "pinning himſelf to your ſide, and therefore, "very prudently makes elopements, ſometimes, "to change the ſcene, that he may come back "to you with a double reliſh for your company."

"Were you in *my* ſituation, Kitty, you would "have different ſentiments. 'Tis eaſy for thoſe "to talk who do not *feel*."

"Indeed, Lucy," ſaid I, "your ſorrows are "*felt* by *me*: but I dare affirm, that though my "brother may ramble a little, he will return to "you with greater fondneſs than ever. Beſides, "all theſe ſuſpicions are entirely created by your "own imagination. Why muſt you, becauſe "Mr. Davers is gone to Beechwood, ſuppoſe "that he is gone to a miſtreſs? If he *had one*, I "ſhould rather think that he would keep her in "town."

"I ſee, Kitty," replied ſhe, "that you wiſh "to remove my diſquiet; but it is not to be re-"moved. I am ſure I am not miſtaken, and I "will tell you why—You heard the excuſe he "made below ſtairs to prevent my going out of "town with him. You imagine that it pro-

"ceeded

"ceeded from a tender regard for my health. I "was willing myſelf to put that conſtruction upon "it, though I ſaw no proofs of a tender concern "for me in his looks and in his behaviour. As "ſoon as we were by ourſelves, I again declared "that I was ready to accompany him to Beech-"wood. He was ſitting in his chair, leaning "back in it, when I ſpoke, with one leg thrown "careleſsly over the other, which he was jogging "while he whiſtled. He appeared at firſt to be "extremely inattentive to me, but my renewed "offer to accompany him immediately rouzed "him, and he haſtily replied, "By no means, "child, I would not have you go upon any ac-"count. *You*, who are juſt out of your bed, to "talk of going into the country this cold weather! "Pray, think no more of it." "I dare ſay I "ſhan't catch cold," replied I, "and the plea-"ſure I ſhall feel by being with you will make "me quite regardleſs of the weather." While "I uttered thoſe words, I laid my hand fondly, "you will ſay fooliſhly, on his ſhoulder. He "ſtarted as if he had been ſtung by an adder; he "actually puſhed me from him; ay, and with "ſuch violence, that it was with the utmoſt diffi-"culty I kept myſelf on my feet. I abſolutely "ſtaggered to the next chair, which I ſeized in "order to ſave myſelf from falling. He could "not be inſenſible of the ſituation into which he

" had thrown me, yet he flumped down again
" into his chair, without offering even a ſingle
" finger to aſſiſt me: not ſo would he have
" behaved ſome months ago: he then would
" have flown to me with all the fondneſs of a
" lover, he would have catched me in his arms,
" he would have ſaved me from the ſlighteſt ap-
" pearance of danger—You do not yet know the
" difference between a huſband and a lover,
" Kitty—A ſtriking change, indeed, in ſo ſhort
" a time! I felt myſelf, I muſt confeſs, exceed-
" ingly hurt at this treatment; it was what I
" had never deſerved, nor could I ever have ex-
" pected it. However, as I had always heard that
" mildneſs and ſubmiſſion were deſirable virtues
" in a wife, I determined to try whether they
" would make any impreſſion upon him, con-
" cluding, that ſomething had put him out of
" humour. As ſoon as I had recovered myſelf a
" little, I aſked him if he was not well." " Yes
" —what makes you think I am ſick?" replied
" he, in a ſurly tone, " I hate ſuch fancies,"
" continued he, riſing and going to the glaſs, in
" which he ſurveyed himſelf, apparently, with
" no ſmall ſatisfaction. The ſelf-ſufficiency of
" his behaviour increaſed, I muſt own, the diſ-
" guſt which he had already excited. In ſpite
" of myſelf I burſt into tears. I ſay, in ſpite of
" myſelf, for I was juſt at that time ſo provoked
" with

" with him, that I wiſhed rather to have diſ-
" covered any paſſion but grief: I would have
" diſcovered anger, contempt, any thing but grief;
" yet I was not able to conceal my tears. I cried,
" out of meer vexation. On hearing me ſob, he
" turned about haſtily from the glaſs, and ſaid,
" What's the matter now? What the devil do
" you cry for?" Finding I made no anſwer, he
" took my hand and with a voice a little ſoftened,
" ſaid, " What ails you, child?" " Nothing,"
" anſwered I ſullenly. " Why, then you are a
" great fool to ſpoil your eyes for nothing."
" Here was an opening for me to declare the
" cauſe of my ſorrow, and I could not help laying
" hold of it, though I believe my declaration did
" more harm than good. " 'Tis of no conſe-
" quence," replied I, " whether I have eyes or
" no, ſince they will not induce you to behold
" me with your uſual kindneſs; ſince they will
" not remove your indifference and ill-humour."
" Nay, now you wrong me, Lucy," ſaid he,
" ſitting down by me, " pray, what indifference
" have I diſcovered? Who was out of humour
" but yourſelf?" " Did you not give a ſtrong
" proof of your indifference," replied I, (half
" inclined to make it up) " by refuſing my offer
" to accompany you to Beechwood?" " No,
" you little ſimpleton," cried he, kiſſing my
" cheek, " I refuſed it becauſe I thought the
" country would be too cold for you, after having

"been so long confined to your chamber. If I "had been indifferent, I should not have cared "whether you were sick or well." "Shall I go "then?" said I. "By no means," answered he, "in a positive tone. This reply vexed me "exceedingly. I could not help thinking that he "had some reason for his peremptory refusal, "which would make me uneasy if I knew it, and "yet I most ardently longed to be acquainted "with it. However, finding that I was not "likely to get a satisfactory answer from him, I "said no more upon that subject, nor indeed "upon any other. He had rendered me unhappy, "and I was willing to let him see that he had. "As to *him*, he did not appear to be much more "contented than I was. He had hardly any rest "during the first part of the night, and in conse-"quence of his having lain so long in a wakeful "state, did not open his eyes till an hour after "the time he had intended to set out. He rose "in a great hurry, and asked what was o'clock. "When I informed him, he exclaimed vehement-"ly against his own sluggishness, immediately "dressed himself with the utmost precipitation "—dropped a paper out of his pocket through "haste—gave me a cold kiss, and bade me divert "myself with my little girl in his absence."

"The moment I saw the post-chaise driven "from the door, I picked up the paper which he

"had

"had dropped, and was particularly curious to "peruſe the contents of it, as I thought it looked "like the letter he had received the preceding "evening. I opened it—but, Oh Kitty! how "ſhall I deſcribe what I felt on ſeeing that it "came from a miſtreſs, and that it had occaſioned "his haſty departure? I then no longer wondered "at his refuſing in ſo peremptory a manner to let "me go with him; and, in the midſt of my "cutting grief, could not help crying out, "Why, why did he marry me only to make me "miſerable? If he liked this woman better than "me, why was he not conſtant to her, as ſhe "muſt have been, by her ſituation, very in-"timately connected with him ſoon after I was "married, if not before?"

Here my ſiſter drew the letter from her pocket, and preſented it to me, leaning her head upon her hand, and weeping aloud.

I looked it over: it was written, I ſaw plainly, with a trembling hand: it was much blotted with the writer's tears—as ſhe ſaid it was; but written in a tender, pathetic, and ſubmiſſive ſtyle. The poor creature affectingly, yet modeſtly related her continual apprehenſions, as the alteration in her ſhape became more and more viſible, and earneſtly begged him to come and ſee her, as his preſence, and his promiſing to think of a ſpeedy method to conceal her pregnancy, could alone

prevent her from having recourſe to the ſhocking means of relieving herſelf from the miſery which ſhe had endured in his abſence. She concluded with earneſtly conjuring him to be expeditious if he wiſhed to ſee her alive.

Returning the letter to my ſiſter, I deſired her to conſider, before ſhe abandoned herſelf to deſpair, how infinitely more happy *ſhe herſelf* was, than the poor unfortunate girl who, though very juſtly afflicted, had been ſeduced by her huſband. "My dear ſiſter," continued I, "though you are ſufficiently convinced that Mr. "Davers has other connections, yet you have all "the reaſon in the world to believe, at the ſame "time, from his behaviour to you at the time "you was brought-to-bed, and ſince, that they "will not be laſting: and ſhould they continue "longer than you wiſh, you will not act wiſely, "I think, by giving way to grief or to deſpon-"dence. You have been guilty of no crime; you "was married to Mr. Davers with the thorough "approbation, at the command, indeed, of your "father, you will therefore be reſpected as his "wife, and enjoy his fortune. Nay, I am "ſtrongly inclined to believe, that you are ſtill "the ſole miſtreſs of his heart, and that when he "is tired of his preſent diſhonourable connec-"tion, he will fly to your arms with renewed "tenderneſs. How very different is *your* condi-

"tion

"tion from that of the wretch who wrote the "letter in your hand, and how ſuperior to it! In "how criminal a manner has *ſhe* behaved, by "having an affair with a married man, and how "many torturing ſenſations muſt ſhe feel! "Perhaps, at this very inſtant, ſhe may be "overwhelmed with ſhame and remorſe. She "certainly is apprehenſive of being driven to ne-"ceſſity with a child to provide for, if ſhe is "deſerted by her ſeducer. Can a woman, then, "my dear, be more unhappily circumſtanced? "And can *your* affliction be with any propriety "compared to her's?"

"And ſo, becauſe there are other people in "the world," ſaid ſhe, lifting up her ſtreaming eyes, "more wretched than I am, you would "put a ſtop to my complaints."

"No, my dear Lucy, I would by no means "hinder you from complaining; I wiſh you to "open your heart more freely to me, as I hope "and believe that the diſcloſure of your ſorrows "will diminiſh the weight of them: and ſurely, "the conſciouſneſs of not having deſerved the "calamities which oppreſs us is a very great con-"ſolation."

I had the ſatisfaction to find her ſtruck with the concluding words of the above ſpeech, and to be benefited by the laſt effort which I made to conſole her. She grew, by degrees, more calm,

and we began to talk over the diſagreeable occurrence with ſome compoſure: yet all our combined conjectures could not lead us to make the wiſhed-for diſcovery. My ſiſter declared, ſhe had always ſuſpected that Lady Juliet Creſwell beheld Mr. Davers with partial eyes, and that he had ſhown no averſion to her; but then the encouragement which ſhe had lately given Charles convinced me that *ſhe* was not the woman about whom we were in ſo perplexed a ſtate. Lucy was not of *my* opinion: ſhe thought that her Ladyſhip might pretend a prepoſition in Charles's favour, to draw him in, as he is young and unexperienced, to marry her, in order to conceal the conſequences of her intimacy with Davers. Upon my telling her, that Lady Juliet could never have penned *that* letter, as the writer of it had expreſſed fears with regard to her own ſubſiſtence and her child's, ſhe ſubſcribed to my way of thinking: Lady Juliet was therefore acquitted with honour, yet we could not help wondering why a woman of her figure and taſte for the pleaſures of the world, ſhould live in a country at a ſeaſon when the town ſwarms with company and diverſions.

In this manner, by drawing off my ſiſter, inſenſibly, to other ſubjects, I brought her into tolerable ſpirits. Yet, when I left her, and retired to my own apartment, I ſincerely felt for her,

her, and pitied her on many accounts. Notwithſtanding all that I have ſaid, poor Lucy has great reaſon to be melancholy. To be neglected in the bloom of life by the man who married her with all the appearance of a fond attachment to her — What a mortifying conſideration! How can ſuch a huſband juſtify ſuch a behaviour to himſelf? Should Mr. Davers's wife—which heaven forbid!—receive too much ſatisfaction from the attentions of another, will not he be anſwerable for her deviation from the paths of rectitude? Do not miſtake me, my dear; I do not think that the huſband's errors can excuſe the indiſcretions of the wife, but if he gives the leaſt encouragement to them by his own imprudent conduct, he is, undoubtedly, in ſome degree, culpable: and I have ſeen ſo much of the married world, in the little time I have been from home, that I begin to look upon the men as the firſt aggreſſors. I, therefore, am of opinion, that it is a great deal better for us not to marry at all, unleſs we can find men diſpoſed to be more conſtant than they are. Lord Hythe would, I believe, make an excellent huſband, were he married to the woman of his choice, and, between ourſelves, I never imagined that Mr. Davers's conſtancy was to be depended upon. Yet, I cannot pronounce him intentionally bad: the mild and diſcreet carriage of the woman whom

he choſe, for her perſon and her manners alone, will, in time, I flatter myſelf, reclaim him: but till he *is* reclaimed, my poor ſiſter may ſuffer a great deal of anxiety: ſhe may alſo, poſſibly, ſee another man more ſolicitous to pleaſe her. How trying is her ſituation, Nancy! May you and I be never thrown into ſuch a one—So prays, with no ſmall earneſtneſs,

Your truly affectionate friend,

C. OSWALD.

LETTER XXVI.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

MY time has been ſo taken upon in making efforts to amuſe Kitty, that I have had no leiſure to write. She has felt ſo much unhappineſs on her ſiſter's account, as well as on her own, that I have pitied her extremely. It was a great while before the ſweet girl could be prevailed on to diſcloſe her ſorrow; but I at laſt gained my point. She has told me every thing; and ſhe has diſcovered ſo much goodneſs of heart, and tender ſenſibility, that I more than love her, I adore her. There is no doing juſtice to the charming delicacy with which ſhe acquainted me with her ſiſter's ſentiments relating to her huſband's inconſtancy: by which information, I find that Davers is better beloved by his wife than he deſerves

deſerves to be, and that it will be his own fault if he is not the happieſt of huſbands.

Hythe might be as bleſt with Kitty, could he ſee her with *my* eyes. There is ſomething inexpreſſibly amiable in theſe two ſiſters: how exactly are they formed, both in perſon and mind, to render domeſtic life a life of felicity; but how unluckily have they been doomed by fate to fix their hearts upon thoſe who are incapable of making proper returns to their partiality for them!

Lord Hythe has taken advantage of Davers's abſence, and his wife's dejection, to be more aſſiduous about her than ever; by ſo doing, he has given Sir William Morley freſh opportunities to buſy himſelf near Kitty; though I cannot ſee that ſhe behaves in a manner the leaſt encouraging. Her thoughts have been, of late, ſo much employed about her ſiſter, that ſhe has rather avoided mixed company, and declined going to public diverſions. I have, therefore, ſpent many happy hours with her without meeting with any interruption. I pleaſe myſelf with thinking, Archy, that I have gained her friendſhip. Her heart is not, I am afraid, at her own diſpoſal at preſent. What effect Morley's addreſſes may have upon it, I know not. He is, as I have ſaid, young and agreeable; he is a man of character, and poſſeſſed of a conſiderable fortune. Could

ſhe be happy with *him*, I would not by any means oppoſe ſuch a union. A man who loves a woman as he ought, loves her more for *her* ſake than for his *own*. Yet, if Kitty declares for Mr. Morley, never ſhall I beſtow a ſerious thought upon any of her ſex again.

I am, dear Hepburne,

Your very ſincere, but at preſent,

Very much embarraſſed friend,

CHARLES SHELBURNE.

LETTER XXVII.

From the Same to the Same.

SHE has refuſed him, my friend; ſhe has refuſed this unexceptionable man. I feel my heart expand with a pleaſure of which I was never ſenſible before. Yet what have I to do with her refuſal? It will be of no advantage to *me*. She will not accept of *my* hand though ſhe has rejected Morley's. However, I derive *this* conſolation from her refuſal; while ſhe is engaged to no man, I ſhall be at liberty to love her, nay, to tell her ſo if I pleaſe.

I ſaw Sir William come from her this morning with a diſſatisfied countenance. I entered the room as he left it. She was working an apron: the pattern was of her own drawing.

"What

"What have you done to Morley?" ſaid I, ſitting down by her.

"Nothing," anſwered ſhe, lifting up her innocent eyes—"Has he ſaid any thing to *you?*"

"No; but he looks diſcontented."

"I cannot help it," replied ſhe; "he made "a very generous offer of his hand and fortune: "I am convinced I deſerve neither of them, be- "cauſe I cannot feel an affection for *him* equal "to that which he profeſſes for *me*, and ſo I told "him, and intreated him not to apply to my fa- "ther. If this behaviour of mine has put him "out of humour, I am ſorry. It hurt me, in- "deed," added ſhe, with an inchanting modeſty, "but I could not bring myſelf to deceive him."

"I am ſorry, my dear Kitty," ſaid I, "that "you do not meet with a lover to your taſte."

"I thank you, Mr. Shelburne," anſwered ſhe, bluſhing, "but very poſſibly, I am better as I "am. My ſiſter thought that ſhe ſhould be "the happieſt of women when ſhe was married "to Mr. Davers, and yet ſhe is diſappointed. "'Tis moſt prudent not to deſire any thing with "too much earneſtneſs; and I begin to grow "indifferent to almoſt every thing in this world. "With ſuch a diſpoſition, I might, you will "ſay, have accepted of Sir William. Unable "as I am to feel any affection for him, I ſhould "make a poor return for his generoſity. Were I

"to

"to conſent to an union with him, I ſhould act "a very unjuſt part too by hindering him from "marrying a woman more likely to be touched "with his merit."

"How infinitely happy," replied I, "will "theſe charming ſentiments make the man "whom you *can* love! What would I give, "Kitty, to be *that* man! There is nothing I "would not ſuffer to arrive at ſuch exquiſite fe-"licity."

She ſighed; ſhe looked up in my face, and with a delicious *naivetè*, ſaid, "Indeed, indeed, "Mr. Shelburne, I wiſh you could arrive at it "without any ſuffering at all."

Lovely creature! I ſhall never forget that dear wiſh. My raptures ſtrongly evinced my feelings. I caught her hand to my lips, and preſſed it with ardor. She drew it back without the leaſt emotion. Her *ſangfroid* deeply affected me. Had ſhe been moved by my behaviour, I ſhould have had ſome hopes; but her chilling compoſure aſſured me, that ſhe only felt a cool eſteem for me. Yet *that*, even *that* is more deſirable to me, than the tendereſt paſſion of any other woman. We ſoon fell into chat upon indifferent ſubjects. However, as ſhe has *wiſhed* that ſhe *could* love me, and as ſhe has *rejected* Sir William, I am as happy as I *can* be, at preſent. I am not *quite* in deſpair.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

WHAT a variety of ſcenes, my dear, do I daily go through in this gay town! I gain lovers this moment, and reject them the next. I am as ſad as it is poſſible for a girl to be, who has nothing particularly relating to herſelf to make her ſo. I am careſſed, indeed, by every body, and yet I am not happy. I eſteem, I honour Mr. Shelburne: no man can behave with more delicacy: but it is both his misfortune and mine, that I do not love him.

I am very uneaſy about my ſiſter. Mr. Davers has been gone above a week, and has not ſent her a ſingle line.

I have had a letter from my mother about Charles; *he* has not been at home to make any ſtay ſince we left Beechwood. He came to viſit my ſiſter in town after the birth of her daughter, and has encouraged my father and mother, it ſeems, to believe, that he has been with *us* from that time. Now we only ſaw him on that very day; we are not able, therefore, to give any account of him. I ſtrongly ſuſpect that he has been either with, or near Lady Juliet. If they like each other well enough to come together, *her* inclination may make amends for the deficiency

ciency in point of fortune, on my brother's ſide, who cannot, you know, have a large income during my father's life, and the alliance may be a happy one for him. Charles will certainly behave well to the woman, who loves him well enough to play a generous part by taking him for her huſband. With regard to myſelf I am in a very aukward ſituation; but ſhall be, in every ſituation,

Yours, moſt affectionately,

C. OSWALD.

LETTER XXIX.

From the Same to the Same.

MY ſiſter is ſo impatient on account of her huſband's abſence, and ſtill more on account of his neglect, that ſhe ſeems determined to go down to Beechwood, and to ſee what he is about. I perſuaded her this morning not to go, leſt Mr. Davers ſhould be incenſed at her coming after him, as he had appeared ſo averſe to her being with him: but I was afraid afterwards that I had been too haſty with my advice, and when I reflected upon what I had ſaid, I was unhappy.

Mr. Shelburne, ever attentive to my looks, aſked me, as ſoon as he found me by myſelf, what

hung

hung upon my mind. "What new uneaſineſs, "My dear Miſs Oſwald, do you feel?"

I told him what I had done, adding, "That I "repented of having interpoſed in an affair of "which I could not be ſo good a judge as my "ſiſter was, having never been married."

"Here I muſt differ from you," replied he, "as I think you are a much better one. *She* is "warm with reſentment—perhaps with jea-"louſy—and is therefore not ſo capable of mak-"ing allowances for her huſband's foibles as you "are, who, being leſs ſenſibly affected by his "conduct, are able to conſider it in a cool and "diſpaſſionate manner. It requires, I muſt own, "ſome conſideration to decide upon this point. "In *my* opinion, your ſiſter ought not to go down "abruptly to Beechwood; ſhe ſhould write firſt "to let him know that ſhe wiſhed to return to "that place."

This way of thinking, my dear, appeared ſo reaſonable to me, that I acquainted my ſiſter with Mr. Shelburne's opinion.

She anſwered in a pet, "Mr. Shelburne and "you would have me accuſtom Mr. Davers to "treat me quite like a child, who never does any "thing without leave; you would actually "have me beg to go to my own houſe. Surely, "Kitty, Beechwood is as much mine as his, "ſince I am his wife."

"True,

"True, my dear ſiſter," ſaid I, "and ſo, "you will add, is every apartment in it; but "certainly, if you knew that Mr. Davers had a "mind to be private in his chamber or cloſet, "you would not bounce in without firſt knock-"ing at the door."

"That's not a parallel caſe," replied ſhe, "eagerly, "I may live in the ſame houſe with "him, certainly, without being always with *him*, "or having *him* with *me*—and I *will* go."

The laſt three words were deciſive, and I had no buſineſs to oppoſe them. In conſequence of this *imprudent* reſolution, we are to ſet out to-morrow, unleſs ſhe alters her mind before the poſt-chaiſe arrives.

Mr. Shelburne has declared his deſign to follow us: Lord Hythe has offered to attend us upon our journey. To the latter, however, my ſiſter made a very diſcreet anſwer—"Your at-"tendance, my Lord, may not be agreeable to "Mr. Davers juſt at this time. It is incumbent "on a wife to go to ſee her huſband, but there is "no neceſſity for her carrying company to him."

Lord Hythe ſighed—"I am ſenſible, Madam, "that you judge perfectly right; but London "will be a deſart without *you*.

She affected to receive this ſpeech as a flight of gallantry; but I believe he ſpoke it in ſober ſad-neſs.

Shelburne

Shelburne is quite dejected at the thoughts of our departure—"How heavily," ſaid he, "will "the hours paſs, when I am deprived of your "ſociety!"

"We cannot always be together, Mr. Shel-"burne."

"We *might*, Madam; but I will never aſk "you to confine yourſelf with a man whom you "cannot love. Oh! Kitty, you do not know "to what a degree I doat on your company; and "yet, what I ſhall feel during this expected ab-"ſence will be nothing to what I muſt endure "when you are married to another."

"You will, moſt probably," ſaid I, "never "have any uneaſineſs to feel on *that* account." I was willing to adminiſter ſome conſolation to him, for I was really hurt to ſee him ſo much in earneſt. I ſincerely wiſh that he did not love me quite ſo well; becauſe I cannot return his paſſion for me. "No man," added I, "ever tormented "himſelf in ſuch a way about imaginary evils."

"You are more likely to be married," replied he, "than to remain in your preſent ſitu-"ation. The men will never let ſuch a woman "alone."

"Your partiality makes you think ſo, Mr. "Shelburne; but as I cannot bring myſelf to "make *you* happy, who are ſo ſtrongly prepoſ-"ſeſſed in my favour, do you imagine that I "ſhall

"ſhall eaſily be prevailed on to accept of any "other man?"

"Dear girl!—You believe, then, that I doat "on you?"

"Yes; and ſincerely wiſh that you *did not*."

"Wonder no longer at my paſſion, Kitty: "where is the woman who would have made ſo "frank a declaration? The majority of your "ſex are flints by nature, and thoſe who happen "to be born with better diſpoſitions, frequently "are made ſo by education and the cuſtoms of "the world. Where is the woman, who, like "you, would care a ſtraw whether her lover was "happy or miſerable? Where is the woman who "has any idea of admitting the addreſſes of the "man, for the ſake of himſelf, without being "entirely biaſſed in his favour by his fortune or "his rank, and who would not marry the moſt "deteſtable object, in order to gratify her am-"bition and her pride? How came *you* then, "Kitty, ſo gentle, ſo compaſſionate, ſo diſin-"tereſted, ſo different from all your ſex?"

But to what purpoſe, my dear, do I tire you with encomiums upon myſelf? I am only induced to repeat them to convince you of Mr. Shelburne's merit, and to make you ſenſible how widely different the addreſſes of a man of ſenſe and underſtanding are to thoſe of a coxcomb. By retaining them in my memory, they may, perhaps,

haps, one day make an impreſſion upon my heart—No—my heart can never be affected by them. However, I ſhall leave Mr. Shelburne with regret, as he is a converſible companion, and a ſincere friend.

LETTER XXX.

From the Same to the Same.

I Never was vain of my penetration till now. How earneſtly have I wiſhed, Nancy, that my poor ſiſter had taken my advice!—Was it not the advice of Mr. Shelburne?—But ſhe could not be eaſy till ſhe knew the worſt; and now I ſcarce know in what manner to afford her any conſolation.

We arrived at Beechwood, juſt before the cloſe of the day. The ſervants told us that their maſter was not at home.

My ſiſter being cold and fatigued with her journey, ordered a fire in the dreſſing-room: to that room ſhe went as ſoon as it was ready for her; we remained in it till *eleven*, without hearing any thing of Mr. Davers.

My ſiſter then rang the bell, and aſked *Brown* (his man) if his maſter neither ſupped nor ſlept at home.

"Sometimes, Madam," replied the fellow, ſtammering, as if at a loſs what to ſay.

The

The anſwer was by no means ſatisfactory. Poor Lucy, though exceedingly fatigued, ſat up till paſt *one*, and then retired to Mr. Davers's apartment, in which ſhe ſtayed all night undiſturbed by him.

I found her in the morning with her eyes almoſt ſwelled out of her head, and half diſtracted to know how ſhe ſhould act; wild to diſcover where Mr. Davers was, and to hear what had kept him from home, and yet utterly unable to determine what ſteps to take towards the removal of the uncertainty about him.

Lady Juliet was again ſuſpected.

After breakfaſt, my ſiſter declared her reſolution to call upon her Ladyſhip, to ſee if ſhe could make any diſcoveries.

I ſhrugged up my ſhoulders.

"Aye, Kitty," ſaid ſhe, weeping with anger as well as grief, "when you come to be married, you will blame me no longer."

I made no anſwer, but threw on my cloak to attend her.

The morning happened to be a fine one: ſhe propoſed walking, therefore. We got to Lady Juliet's before ſhe could have any ſuſpicion of our being in the country.

The firſt perſon whom we ſaw in the parlour was Charles. He was ſitting at a table alone, and tracing out a pattern for embroidery upon ſilk.

"So,

"So, Sir, you are found at laſt," cried my ſiſter.

"Lucy and Kitty!" replied he, redning, "who would have thought of ſeeing *you* here? "How does Mr. Davers?"

"Let me rather aſk *you* how he does," ſaid Lucy, "for I have not ſeen him."

Charles ſeemed, I thought, to ſmother a ſmile. Pitying my ſiſter, and being willing to relieve her as much as poſſible, I aſked him where Lady Juliet was.

"She is gone up ſtairs, I believe," replied he, ſomewhat embarraſſed.

"Do you live *here*, Charles?" ſaid I, ſmiling.

"What a queſtion! How came you to think "of ſuch a thing?"

"'Tis a very natural queſtion, is it not," ſaid my ſiſter, "as you have been miſſing ſo long, and as nobody could tell where to find you."

"Appearances are deceitful," replied he, "and if people draw concluſions from them, "they may be miſtaken."

Without adding another word he roſe, and left the room.

In about ten minutes afterwards Lady Juliet came down and expreſſed great ſurprize, but declared ſhe was glad to ſee us. (Not a ſyllable of that declaration was true, I dare ſay.) "You "did not expect to ſee your brother here, I "fancy.

"fancy. As he called to ſee me, I inſiſted upon "his ſtaying, and helping me to finiſh this pat-"tern for a work-bag, which I am going to "paint. He excuſed himſelf for a long time, "but I made him ſit down, at laſt, and take up "my pencil. I cannot think where he is gone.— "Mr. Oſwald," continued ſhe, opening the door, "have you not ſeen theſe ladies?—I thought he "had been there."

This careleſſneſs was, I plainly ſaw, affected, and doubted not but that ſhe had been contriving to frame an apology for his being found at her houſe.

He ſoon returned, but not before my ſiſter had enquired after Miſs Pigot.

"She is gone to ſee a friend in Wales," ſaid my Lady, "much againſt my will, indeed, but "ſhe would not be diſſuaded from her journey; "and I don't know whether ſhe will ever return "to *me* or not. I reſented her leaving me on a "ſudden, ſo much, that I fancy I ſhall never ſee "her again at *my* houſe.

"That's a great pity, my Lady," ſaid I, "for I think Miſs Pigot is a very amiable girl."

"Yes—her perſon is well enough," replied Lady Juliet, "but when people grow ſo fantaſti-"cal that they do not know when they are hap-"pily ſituated, 'tis high time to have done with "them."

She

She then gave a turn to the converſation. Soon afterwards my brother came in.

My ſiſter told him, that his father wiſhed to know where he had been ſo long, and when he intended to come home.

He returned but a ſlight anſwer. Lucy, in a little while roſe to go. He aſked us if he ſhould walk home with us. His company, juſt at that time, would be, I thought, doubly agreeable, as he might probably, when he was only with *us*, tell us how he came to live at her Ladyſhip's houſe, and if he had ſeen Mr. Davers; but my ſiſter deſired that ſhe might not take him from Lady Juliet, and tripped away before either of them had an opportunity to make any reply.

When we were out of their ſight and hearing, I ſaid to Lucy, "Should we not have "done better by taking Charles home with "us?"

"He either *could not* or *would not* give me "any information about Mr. Davers," replied "ſhe, "and it is plainly to be perceived upon "what footing he is with Lady Juliet. She "has drawn him in, poor fellow; and, I ſup-"poſe, has turned off Miſs Pigot, leſt Charles "ſhould, in time, prefer Sally to her Lady-"ſhip. I dare ſay they are all in the ſame "ſcheme."

"Why, ſurely," ſaid I, "you don't ima-
"gine that Lady Juliet has deſigns upon Mr.
"Davers too?"

"Indeed but I do," replied ſhe, "I always
"thought ſo: I believe ſhe is a woman of ge-
"neral gallantry."

While we were chatting in this manner, I ſaw a genteel man croſſing a field, and going towards a little gate in a corner of it. I thought he had very much the air of Mr. Davers. Before I could open my lips, my ſiſter's eyes were fixed upon him.

"There is Davers," cried ſhe, quickening her pace, "he will be gone before either of us
"can reach him or make him hear." He ſoon opened the gate, which cloſed after him. When we came up to it, we found it faſt locked; nor did we know to what place it led, as the path was a private one into which we had turned to get at it. We looked through the key-hole, and ſaw only a long walk in a garden, but no building any where appeared. We then ſtruck into the road to ſee if there was any houſe, which, by its ſituation, could have ſuch a back-door belonging to it; but no ſuch houſe could we diſcover. In ſhort, we tired ourſelves ſo much—my ſiſter was particularly fatigued, as ſhe had not quite recovered her ſtrength—that we did not know how to get home, and we met nobody

nobody who was able to gratify our curioſity. At laſt, my ſiſter became ſo faint, that ſhe could not walk at all, and I began to be extremely frightened about her. She leaned upon my arm, and ſeemed to be ready to ſink with wearineſs. Luckily, as we thought, we then ſaw an old woman picking up ſticks at a little diſtance. Calling her to me, I aſked her, if there was no houſe near, to which ſhe could direct us, as we were tired with walking, and wanted to reſt ourſelves. She ſtared, and heſitated for ſome time, as if uncertain what to ſay; at laſt, perceiving that my ſiſter looked very ill, and that I put my hand in my pocket, and ſhewed her half a crown, ſhe bade us follow her down a turning. We walked a good while; we met not a ſingle creature, nor did any houſe appear. I began to be alarmed, fearing our guide might have a bad deſign. On her opening a little wicket upon her right hand, we beheld a low white houſe on the other ſide: out of that houſe came a very tight girl. "Can you let "this lady reſt herſelf," ſaid I; "ſhe has been ill, "and we have loſt our way: ſhe is ſo much fa- "tigued that ſhe is not able to go any farther." Whether the girl miſunderſtood me, or whether ſhe took us for people of more conſequence than we were, I cannot ſay, but ſhe curtſied, and opened a parlour door. Gueſs our aſtoniſhment

at ſeeing Mr. Davers leaning careleſsly on the back of a chair on which ſat Sally Pigot—whom, according to Lady Juliet's information, we believed to be in Wales—in a reclined poſture, with her face cloſe to his. She ſtarted and ſcreamed at the ſight of us. My brother—Why muſt I call ſuch a man brother?—But I am interrupted. I muſt finiſh at another ſitting.

In continuation.

Miſs Pigot, I was ſaying, ſcreamed. She ſcreamed and fainted. Mr. Davers ſtood in a ſituation which excited my compaſſion; in ſpite of my anger, I could not help pitying him. Seemingly oppreſſed with the weight of his guilt, he caſt his eyes alternately on the poor unhappy women before him; unhappy by *his* cruel behaviour.

My ſiſter, overpowered by her ſurprize and concern, and being alſo too fatigued to ſupport herſelf, ſunk into a chair, and looked like the picture of death. However, as ſhe was not apparently in ſo dangerous a way as Miſs Pigot, I ran to *her* aſſiſtance: but I really feared that we ſhould not be able to adminiſter any effectual relief, for ſhe fell out of one fainting fit into another. In ſhort, I actually deſpaired of her

recovery;

recovery; ſo did Mr. Davers, and he appeared to be extremely miſerable. He ſtood gazing at her with an aſpect which ſufficiently denoted his diſtreſs: he alſo turned now and then towards my ſiſter, who put him by with one hand while ſhe reſted her head on the other, and ready to drop through vexation and weakneſs.

Miſs Pigot, at laſt, came to her ſenſes, but it was only to lament, with floods of tears, the ſituation to which ſhe was reduced. She wrung her hands, and when ſhe ventured to liſt up her weeping eyes, threw them down again haſtily, with a deep ſigh, and ſeemed to ſhrink into herſelf, as if overwhelmed with ſhame.

My poor ſiſter, whom I attempted to comfort, as ſoon as I ſaw Miſs Pigot out of danger, roſe, feebly, and taking me by the arm, made an eaſy effort to move, without looking at her rival.

Mr. Davers obſerving her deſign, told her, that ſhe had better go home, adding, that he would ſoon follow her.

"I had better never have come here, Mr. "Davers," ſaid ſhe, with a reproachful air, "but I will immediately remove myſelf from a "place in which my company cannot be deſired. "I will, firſt, however, aſſure you, that chance "alone brought me hither. My ſiſter can "vouch for my veracity upon this occaſion."

I was ſorry ſhe ſaid ſo much—ſhe ſtrove, indeed, to keep down her reſentment, it ſparkled in her eyes, and was ſtrongly expreſſed in the tone of her voice.

Davers ſaw her reſentment, heard it, and felt it. I therefore pulled her away, that no more might be uttered to widen the breach between them.

As ſoon as ſhe got out of the houſe, ſhe claſped her hands together in an agony, and exclaimed, "Oh! Kitty, Kitty! Could I ever "have thought that it would have come to "this!"

I ſaid nothing. What reply could I have made of the conſoling kind? When afflictions attack us ſo ſuddenly, and with ſuch violence, pretty equal is the abſurdity and inutility of an oppoſition to them: by oppoſition we do not weaken them, we only render them leſs ſupportable. By weeping with thoſe who weep you take the moſt probable way to comfort them: they will, in time be comforted, and forget their own concern, while they are prompted by compaſſion to alleviate yours. In this manner I acted with regard to my ſiſter, whoſe ſituation demanded all my pity. I was, indeed, exceedingly ſhocked at ſo unaccountable a change in a man, who appeared to be one of the tendereſt of huſbands, in ſo little a while. If men are

thus

thus fickle by nature, what woman, Nancy, can expect felicity in the marriage ſtate!—One ſhould, I think, rather wiſh to avoid *this* ſtate, with the greateſt care, than harbour the leaſt inclination to enter into it.

In about an hour after we had been at home, Mr. Davers arrived. My ſiſter was ſitting in an elbow chair, with her head ſupported by her hand, quite buried in melancholy.

He walked up and down for a conſiderable time, without uttering a ſyllable. She too was ſilent, and ſat, I thought, rather ſullen.

At laſt, he turned ſhort upon her, and ſaid, "So, Madam, you ſee what you have got by "your curioſity—What a d——d ridiculous de-"ſire have ſome people to be impertinent!"

This ſarcaſtic reprimand rouzed all my ſiſter's anger, and ſhe haſtily replied, "Were men to "have no faults but thoſe with which they "charge their wives, were they only to have "*curioſity*, were they only to be *impertinent*" —Speaking the words which I have marked, emphatically—"there would be much more feli-"city in the marriage-ſtate, I fancy, than there "is at preſent."

"As this is your opinion, Madam, 'tis no "wonder that you came hither in ſearch of me, "and of my faults. The ſeparation of a huſ-

" band a few days from his wife, is, I ſuppoſe,
" according to your ſtandard for conjugal beha-
" viour, a moſt heinous offence."

" When men, Sir, will not permit their
" wives to accompany them, and prefer the
" ſociety of other women, thoſe wives may,
" I imagine, wiſh they were more conſtant,
" without being criminal."

" But not without being extremely fooliſh.
" When a woman diſcovers a reſtleſs propenſity
" to dive into ſecrets which her huſband wiſhes
" to conceal from her, and follows him every
" where, in order to gratify her prying diſpoſi-
" tion, ſhe will, indiſputably, render him weary
" of her, and induce him to aſſociate with
" any of her ſex who are not deſirous of diſ-
" turbing him."

" If this is the conſtruction you put upon my
" behaviour, Sir, you may make yourſelf quite
" eaſy for the future: you may follow your own
" inclinations, unmoleſted; for *your* carriage
" has quite cured me of the ſlighteſt wiſh to
" live with you again. You may return to
" Miſs Pigot as ſoon as you pleaſe; but I fancy,
" ſhe will have no great reaſon to pique herſelf
" upon your conſtancy: ſhe will not, with all
" her *ſuperior* attractions, be able to keep you
" faithful to *her* alone."

This

This laſt ſpeech was too imprudent: it was pronounced in a manner which diſcovered more contempt than grief, or than anger. Where is the man who can bear *contempt* from a woman, eſpecially from his wife? I was ſorry to ſee her carried ſo far by her reſentment, and ventured to pull her by the ſleeve, but ſhe was too deeply engaged, irritated by her wrongs to attend to me.

Mr. Davers turned full upon her, with inflamed looks; looks which I ſhall never forget. "I did not ſolicit *your* permiſſion, Madam," replied he, "to do what I pleaſe. I am maſter "of my own actions, and you ſhall ſee, you "ſhall feel that I am. The woman who quiet-"ly ſubmits to *my* pleaſure, without giving way "either to jealouſy or pride—two paſſions which "will diſfigure the fineſt face in the univerſe—"will always be the miſtreſs of my heart. "Who that woman is you have no buſineſs to "enquire." Then, ſtepping up ſtill cloſer to her, with an air which denounced revenge, he added, "Let me adviſe you, however, not to "mention Miſs Pigot's name to any body breath-"ing, or to give the moſt diſtant hint that you "ſuſpect any thing relating to her connections. "—Do you *hear* me? Do not once articulate "her name, I ſay, if you ever hope to ſee me "reconciled to you."

With theſe ſevere words ſharply delivered, he left the room, and left my ſiſter in a ſituation which I cannot deſcribe, for want of language adequate to the occaſion. She kept up her ſpirits tolerably till Mr. Davers was out of the room: ſhe then fell upon my neck, burſt into tears, and exclaimed, "Oh! Kitty, Kitty, "what will become of me?"

My tears flowed as faſt as hers. I was little qualified to be her comforter, eſpecially, as I thought that *ſhe*, as well as my brother, had been highly blameable. Had ſhe received the firſt effuſions of Mr. Davers's diſcontent with mildneſs, and had ſhe made no reply, or but a ſlight one to them, he might have been ſenſible of his injurious proceedings; and if his *pride* had been too great to ſuffer him to acknowledge them, he might have *appeared*, at leaſt, to think no more of what had paſſed, he might have treated her, perhaps, with good nature: but *ſhe* was too warm, and *he* was too much irritated to check the tide of his paſſion.

Miſerable as my poor Lucy was, how could I increaſe her diſtreſs by finding fault with her? I did not reproach her. I ſtrove to ſooth her agitated mind to peace by ſympathizing with her ſorrows.

As ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe raiſed her weeping eyes, and with a faint voice, ſaid, "I "will go, Kitty, I will leave this place, and "ſet

"ſet out directly for London. Be ſo good "as to order the chaiſe. I cannot order it "myſelf."

Not knowing well what to adviſe, and really thinking that in the humour Mr. Davers, and my ſiſter were at that time, the leſs they ſaw each other, the better, I complied with her requeſt, and prepared to quit a ſpot which had produced nothing but vexation to me.

The chaiſe was ſoon at the door. When my ſiſter roſe to go towards it, I aſked her if ſhe would take leave of Mr. Davers, who was, I ſuppoſed ſtill, in the houſe, or let him know that ſhe was going.

"I ſhall give myſelf no farther trouble about "him," ſaid ſhe, "ſince he has been offended "with me for nothing, 'tis fit that he ſhould have "*ſome* provocation."

I could not by any means agree to thoſe haughty ſentiments. I told her, that I hoped, and believed ſhe would, in a ſhort time, have occaſion to change her opinion. I ventured to recommend ſubmiſſion as well as patience, (for I ſee plainly, I think, that Mr. Davers will not be reclaimed by a revolting carriage); and I added, that a wife, however ſhe may find herſelf aggrieved, ſhould not diſcover a backwardneſs to make proper conceſſions, if ſhe had

had the leaſt reaſon to imagine, that ſuch conceſſions would prove conciliating.

She ſhook her head, and in accents which fully expreſſed her feelings, ſaid, "You talk, "Kitty, very plauſible: but when you are "married, you will talk in another ſtrain."

I aſſured her, that what I had ſaid to her had been occaſioned by my great anxiety on *her* account, and I ſincerely wiſhed to find out ſome way to give her relief under her very oppreſſing diſquiet.

"I am thoroughly ſatisfied with your good "intentions," replied ſhe, "but nothing can "make me eaſy; nothing can recompence me "for the loſs of Mr. Davers's affection."

We both arrived in town extremely fatigued, and out of ſpirits. My ſiſter retired to *her* apartment, and I to mine.

I muſt now diſpatch this long letter, or it will be too late for the poſt.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

From the Same to the Same.

I AM quite weary of London, and yet it is not in my power to leave it. My ſiſter will not hear of my returning home: ſhe has even written to my mother to tell her, that ſhe is not well, and that ſhe cannot ſpare me. She has alſo inſiſted upon my ſaying nothing to my mother concerning the late difference between her and Mr. Davers. I approved of that injunction; for, ſhould he find that my ſiſter has made any communications or complaints about him, he may be ſtill farther incenſed againſt her. The complaints of a wife rarely produce a reformation in a huſband.

I am wretched, beyond expreſſion, however: I am full of apprehenſions. Lord Hythe came here the day after our arrival, and behaved in ſo tender a manner to my ſiſter, that I tremble for her. I am alarmed, you will ſay, becauſe I have ſo high an opinion of his powers of pleaſing, as to ſuppoſe that no woman can reſiſt him. No—Nancy, I think I ſee a great alteration in my ſiſter's carriage to him: ſhe appears to be more pleaſed with his attentions about her, more

ready

ready to accept of his offered ſervices. She ſmiles at him through her tears. You cannot conceive how this behaviour of hers pains me. Do not imagine that I am jealous of Hythe. I love my ſiſter, and am, therefore, jealous of her *honour*. Gracious heaven! What will become of her if ſhe ſhould admire him as much as I do! Forgive me, Nancy;—yet ſurely one may admire ſo enchanting a man without being criminal. I am not married: I am not engaged. While I keep my ſentiments from *him* who inſpires them, can I be deemed blameable? Let me not, however, be too haſty. Poor Shelburne! He ſuffers for me, I am ſure. With what unaffected tenderneſs does he look at me! Can I thus hourly torment a man who ſpends his whole life in trying to pleaſe me? I do nothing, purpoſely, to teaze him, but I ſee, I feel that he is pained by the preference which I give to Hythe; a preference which I, indeed, ſtudiouſly endeavour to conceal, and which he would not, I believe, diſcover, were he not ſo particularly attached to me. (No people, you know, are ſo quick-ſighted as lovers.) Is it not, then, ill-natured, nay cruel, to ſteel my heart againſt *him?* Think me not vain enough, my dear, to inſinuate, that I do not know any woman who is ſo well-beloved as myſelf; but I *muſt* declare, that no man can ever love me with a delicacy

equal

equal to Shelburne's. In a thouſand little ſituations, he diſcovers ſentiments ſo refined, and ſo uncommon, that I cannot but own him to be the moſt eſtimable of men. If I thought I deſerved him, I would give him my hand to-morrow. What ſtrange inconſiſtent creatures are we! How continually do we act in oppoſition to reaſon! I prefer the man of whom I cannot approve; I refuſe *him* who appears to be poſſeſſed of every virtue which can adorn human nature. How inconſiſtent, how irrational am I! I cannot account for my conduct, Nancy, but I condemn it. I hate myſelf for being ſo *abſurd*; but that is too feeble a word—do *you* put a ſtronger one in the room of it, a word which may more forcibly expreſs the folly of my behaviour.

LETTER XXXII.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

INTO what diſtreſsful ſituations will not theſe amiable people bring themſelves, merely by not endeavouring to ſet bounds to their paſſions! They do not indeed, I believe, ſee the dangers to which they are expoſed, and from which I would, gladly, ſave them—but how to be ſerviceable to them! There is the point.

I am

I am truly ſorry for Davers, and wiſh to make him ſee his errors; the more do I wiſh to render him ſenſible of his miſtakes, on Mrs. Davers's account, who may, I fear, be induced, from the inconſtancy and neglect of her huſband, and from the flattering aſſiduities of an agreeable man, to deviate from that diſcretion which has, hitherto, diſtinguiſhed her from the generality of young and handſome married women who are at preſent taken notice of.

As to Kitty, ſhe is ſo exceedingly diſtreſſed about them that I would do every thing in my power to alleviate her anxiety, which has really made a change in her perſon; ſhe ſighs continually, and looks pale; and I frequently ſee a tear ſtealing down her dear face: never do I behold her tears without wiſhing, while I ſincerely ſympathize with her, to wipe them away with the gentle hand of friendſhip; but I check my ardent inclination, becauſe I would not have her think me too free, too impertinent. The ſweet girl, however, has opened her heart to me; ſhe has diſcloſed all her apprehenſions, but with a tenderneſs, a delicacy, charming beyond expreſſion.—I always loved her, I now adore her—Critically ſituated, ſhe has lately diſcovered ſo juſt a way of thinking, and has conducted herſelf with ſuch uncommon propriety, that I grow more and more fond of her every day. But to what

what purpoſe do I admire, to what purpoſe do I revere her, if I make no attempts to remove the cauſe of her diſquiet? I ſometimes reſolve to go down after Davers, and to talk with him. He has given many proofs of his good ſenſe, and his good nature, but he muſt be groſsly deficient in both if he perſiſts in giving up ſuch a wife as his for a little inſignificant girl, who had, ſurely, nothing but her virtue to recommend her.

In Continuation.

I ſhall ſet out, to-morrow, for Beech-wood. I have juſt taken leave of Kitty. Our parting affected me—we had been ſitting—Lord Hythe, Mrs. Davers, Kitty, and myſelf—all the evening together. The two former fooled away their time in idle chat, and ſeemed, I thought, deſirous of our abſence. At laſt I told Kitty, ſoftly, that I ſhould go out of town the next morning, and that I did not know when I ſhould return. She ſtarted, leaned forward in her chair, looked in my face, ſighed, and cried, "Are you really going?—What ſhall I do by "myſelf?"

I was ſtruck with the laſt words—Catching her hand in mine, and gazing tenderly at her, I replied,

I replied, "Shall you be ſorry then to part with "me, Kitty?"

"Can you aſk ſuch a queſtion? anſwered ſhe; "Have I a ſingle friend in town but "you?"

I preſſed her dear hand. "What tranſport "do I feel in being looked upon by *you* in ſo "flattering a light! Yes, my deareſt Kitty, I "am, indeed, your trueſt friend: I would freely "reſign my life to purchaſe *your* happineſs, I "leave you with the greateſt regret, but hope "that my return will be ſatisfactory."

She was ſilent awhile, ſuffering me, however, to detain her hand, and ſoon afterwards ſaid, with an anxiety in her countenance, "How long "ſhall you be abſent?"

"Be aſſured," replied I, "that I ſhall come "back with all poſſible expedition. Does not "every feature in my face tell you plainly that I "ſhall barely exiſt while I am out of your ſight, "and that I ſhall feel a thouſand uneaſy ſenſati-"ons on your account? The moſt trifling inci-"dent which diſturbs *your* tranquillity is ſuffi-"cient to deſtroy *my* peace."

"Why, then, will you leave me," ſaid ſhe, with a voice melodiouſly plaintive.

In hopes of making *you* happy," replied I, "by carrying a little ſcheme into execution; I "have doubts, indeed, but—"

"What

"What is your ſcheme?" ſaid ſhe eagerly, and with inquiſitive eyes—"Do tell me, Mr. "Shelburne."

Could I refuſe?

"My deſign is to reaſon Mr. Davers into a "proper ſenſe of his duty, and to make him "aſhamed of his conduct."

She ſhook her head. "You mean well, Mr. "Shelburne, and we ſhall be obliged to you "whether you ſucceed or not. I fear your ge- "nerous efforts will be ineffectual."

I told her that I could but try the ſtrength of my reaſoning, and intreated her to ſend a line to me at Beechwood if any thing ſhould happen to make her wiſh to have my advice.

She thanked me, I kiſſed her hand, and left her.

Suppoſe *you* were to write to Davers upon this ſubject? You are married, and, it may be imagined know better than we ſingle fellows how a man ought to behave to his wife: tho' Kitty has, I think, taught me ſufficiently how to *love*, and when once a man is truly attached to a woman, he certainly wants no inſtructions to uſe her well. Davers when he married Lucy, was, probably, more enamoured with her perſonal, than her intellectual charms: the former, indeed, are, I believe, more ſtriking than the latter; yet, tho' I cannot allow her to be ſo

amiable

amiable as Kitty, I am of opinion ſhe would diſcover no want of tenderneſs if her huſband could be cured of his inconſtancy. I have written all this becauſe I wiſh you to join with me in my deſign to endeavour to reclaim Davers, and becauſe my mind is ſo much agitated at preſent (ſuch an impreſſion have Kitty's farewel accents made on me) that I cannot cloſe my eyes. I muſt try, however, to ſteal away from my thoughts: it is late, and I am to be up early for my journey.

Adieu.

LETTER XXXIII.

From the Same to the Same.

I Entered Davers's houſe with my uſual familiarity. In about an hour after my arrival he came home. He ſeemed to be ſurprized, but not diſpleaſed to ſee me. "How came you "here?" ſaid he, ſmiling; "how were you "able to leave Kitty?—Ah Charles, I choſe "the wrong ſiſter. Kitty, tho' not ſo ſtrikingly "lovely as Lucy, is of a milder diſpoſition: "my wife has a ſpirit, which will, I fear, give "me a confounded deal of trouble."

"Have you not your ſelf been cenſurable, "Davers?" replied I. "Mrs. Davers would, I dare

"I dare ſwear, be as mild as you can wiſh her "to be, if ſhe had reaſon to believe you were "as ſtrongly attached to her as ever. A good "huſband makes a good wife at any time."

"Indeed?—Prythee, Charles, what book of "old laws have you been poring over? But you "are miſtaken in me, if you rank me among "the bad huſbands. I have never been defici- "ent in love to Mrs. Davers. Never could ſhe "accuſe me of want of affection till ſhe ſuſ- "pected me, watched me, followed me, re- "proached me. What man of ſpirit will bear "*ſuch* behaviour in a wife? In anſwer to your "wife ſaying, Shelburne, I muſt tell you that "a *good wife* makes a good huſband. Had "Lucy remained in town agreeably to my ear- "neſt deſire, I ſhould have returned to her in a "few days. Her carriage ſince my departure "from her is not to be defended. Not content- "ed with ſtealing letters out of my pocket, ſhe "hurried down hither after me in a fit of jea- "louſy, and behaved with a pride, and an im- "pertinence not to be endured. Now, if *you* "think ſuch a behaviour in a wife is to be coun- "tenanced, I do not: and if you imagine that "it will bring me back, little as I am diſpoſ- "ed to quarrel with her, you will be miſ- "taken."

"If

"If Mrs. Davers," ſaid I, "has behaved "in the manner you have deſcribed, I am ſorry "for you both. But are you ſure that you did "not firſt provoke her to act with ſo much vio-"lence, by your own inexcuſeable conduct? "When a man has a young, handſome, affec-"tionate wife, the woman of his choice too, "what can induce him to leave her, and connect "himſelf with other women? and if he does, "can he ſuppoſe that ſhe will not *feel* his "deſertion?"

"Ay, and ſpeak of it alſo," replied he, interrupting me, "as you will find. Come, come, "Davers, you are too hard upon your wife, you "gave her ſufficient provocation: and tho' we "will admit that ſhe has carried her reſentment "too far, it may fairly be ſuppoſed that it aroſe "from the exceſs of her affection for you, "which would not permit her to conduct herſelf "on the diſcovery of your infidelity, with mo-"deration. Had ſhe not then loved you ſo well, "poſſibly, ſhe would not have ſaid ſo much. "With a luke-warm paſſion for you, ſhe would "have treated you with indifference, and with "neglect."

"Yes, but women may certainly diſcover "their regard without being ſo violent. There "was infinitely more fury in Lucy's expreſſion "than ſorrow."

"Well,

"Well, but after all," ſaid I, "will you "not allow that a woman muſt be in a very diſ- "agreeable ſituation, when ſhe ſees the man "whom ſhe loves, and who *was*, ſhe believes, "fond of her, in purſuit of another? and "what apology, I ſay again can a man make "for rambling who has ſo handſome a wife at "home?"

"Why, there is, probably, no good apology "to be made," replied he, "and yet it is im- "poſſible for a human creature to do the quite "right thing ſometimes. The fancy is ſome- "times ſeized when the heart remains free. "However, when that happens to be the caſe "we are ſoon cloyed with our new pleaſures, "and return to our old ones with a double "reliſh. Cannot a woman, therefore, make "allowances?"

"She had better, I confeſs; but a married "man, at the ſame time, ſhould conſider, that "his wanderings are by no means ſtrictly juſti- "fiable; for tho' *he* may with an additional "luſtre to his character in the eye of the gay "world, follow a dozen women, yet were his "wife only to liſten to the *douceurs* of another "man, ſhe would ſoon loſe her reputation, and "become odious to that huſband who had firſt "infringed the matrimonial contract. Cuſtom "has, in my opinion, been too indulgent to married

"married men; there are many I am ſatisfied, "who would derive conſiderable advantages from "a firm adherence to their marriage vows: and "were every man after his wedding day, to be "ſmartly taxed on every deviation from his con-"jugal fidelity, he would ſoon, perhaps, be "conſtant, and, probably, a happy huſband."

"I am of a different opinion. The ſlighteſt "tax upon huſbands, whenever they are diſpoſed "to have any *affairs* abroad, will only ſerve to "drive them more frequently from home. Pro-"hibited goods are always greedily ſought after, "and the heavier the duties upon them, the "more powerfully do they attract our atten-"tion."

"Well, but don't you think we have privi-"leges ſuperior to any which the other ſex "enjoy? Or are you one of thoſe huſbands, "who, in order to roam with the greater free-"dom, wink at the ramblings of their wives?"

"I will never be one of that contemptible "number," ſaid he, eagerly. "On the con-"trary, I ſhall look very diligently after my "wife's conduct, and if I have the leaſt reaſon "to ſuſpect her, I ſhall not think of excuſing "*her* infidelities, by reflecting upon my own. "The conſequences ariſing from an amour on "her ſide, and a temporary connection on "mine can, with no propriety, be compared.

"If

"If I have twenty children by twenty different "women, my rank remains unſullied, and my "honour unimpeached, though my fortune may "be impaired. But by the incontinence of my "wife, I may have an heir to my eſtate, with-"out being a father to him, and have the "mortification to ſee a legitimate ſon excluded "from his rightful ſucceſſion. Therefore, pry-"thee, Shelburne, ſay no more upon this ſub-"ject; it will not bear an examination."

Finding that I could not bring him over to *my* ſentiments, and perceiving him to grow both impatient and weary, I made a new movement, and attacked him in another part. "You have "freely declared yourſelf for unlimited power "in a huſband; but can you, poſſibly, look "upon the ſeduction of a girl, who, uncor-"rupted by *your* inſinuating arts, might have "been, at this hour, innocent as a venial "crime?"

He pauſed a moment, and grew very ſerious. "I do not pretend," replied he, "to excul-"pate myſelf entirely with regard to Sally "Pigot: but what the devil would you have "a man to do, Shelburne? The girls actually "throw themſelves into one's arms. But I ſee "my wife has been prating. D—n theſe wo-"men; they can never hold their tongues."

I began to affirm, with the greateſt ſolemnity, that Mrs. Davers had ſaid nothing to *me*; and I affirmed the truth.

"Well then, Kitty has been chattering—"But, upon my honour, Charles I had no de-"ſign in the world upon Sally Pigot: I was, "even at the time we firſt became intimate, in "the height of my paſſion for my wife. Lady "Juliet and our little friend were in the houſe "with us: Sally is pretty; a delicate young "creature. Yet I was not ſtruck merely with "her perſon neither: to tell you the truth, ſhe "always appeared to me to be unhappy, and "conſequently excited my compaſſion. I was "not, however, prompted by pity to take im-"proper advantages. I was rather impelled by "opportunity to avail myſelf of the prepoſſeſſi-"ons which ſhe had long diſcovered in my fa-"vour. She was always pleaſed with my chat-"ting to her, and we were often accidentally, "in a *tête-a-tête*. One day, when we were by "ourſelves, I was hurried—I don't know how "it happened—to take ſome very tender liberties "with her; ſhe grew more and more ſoftened, "and, at laſt, totally unable to make any re-"ſiſtance, ſuffered me to do what I pleaſed with "her. She has ſince that unguarded moment "lamented her indiſcretion with the ſevereſt "expreſſions. She has, indeed, more than

"once,

"once, attempted to deſtroy herſelf, declaring, "that ſhe cannot ſupport life expoſed either to "neglect or contempt. I am thoroughly ſen- "ſible that I have behaved to her in a very "improper, and in a very unjuſtifiable manner, "and that I ought to make her all the repara- "tion in my power: but what has my wife to "do with all this? *She* can never, at the worſt, "be injured like this poor girl. My wife ſhares "my name and my fortune: her children will "inherit both; and as ſhe is virtuous and diſ- "creet, ſhe will be eſteemed and reſpected by "my friends and family. On the other hand, "this unfortunate creature is loſt to all the world "but *me*; and as I am the cauſe of her diſtreſs, "it is incumbent on me to do every thing I "poſſibly can to relieve her."

"So far you are right," replied I, "it is, "indiſputably, your duty to provide for *her* "and her child; but are you, therefore, to "attach yourſelf entirely to her, and to give "up Mrs. Davers? Ought you not, on the "contrary, for the poor girl's ſake, as well as "for your own, and your wife's, to withdraw "yourſelf from her for ever, after having made "a decent proviſion for her, that ſhe may, by "a ſincere repentance, endeavour to atone for "her imprudent conduct?"

"Such a behaviour on my ſide might be highly commendable," ſaid he, "but then, my deſertion juſt now, would, I believe, break her heart; and I think I have made her wretched enough already. I ſhall, therefore, rather employ my thoughts to afford her all poſſible conſolation, than to increaſe her unhappineſs."

"And ſo you intend to leave Mrs. Davers, who has never ſwerved from her duty, a prey to jealouſy and diſcontent, and to attach yourſelf to this girl, who, though a truly pitiable object, at preſent, I allow, cannot be worthy of your attention, compared with a woman who has never erred."

"Don't aſk me any more queſtions, Shelburne. My mind is quite in a ſtate of confuſion. Time, perhaps, may reſtore me to myſelf: but be aſſured, that I ſhall not think of abandoning Sally till ſhe is better reconciled to her ſituation."

With theſe words he left me. I have deſired you to write to him: on ſecond thoughts, I believe, we ſhall act more prudently by giving him a little reſt. His ſentiments and actions are not at all according to my wiſhes, and yet the concern which he ſhews for this unhappy girl is is a proof of his tenderneſs which I did not expect from him. He cannot, it is true, be defended

ſended for having ſeduced her, but his willingneſs to make atonement for his diſhonourable behaviour is ſurely to be commended. Let us, then, leave him for a while to his own reflections. There are ſome men who will not bear a great deal of advice at once — Davers is, I apprehend, one of *them:* he is, naturally, high-ſpirited; and as he has no mean opinion of himſelf, he may be the more eaſily hurt by the detection of his follies, eſpecially when thoſe follies are not only diſcovered by his friends, but freely cenſured. A man of this turn is too proud to acknowledge himſelf in the wrong, yet ſuch a man will, on a ſerious examination of his heart, be thoroughly ſenſible of his failings; and if he finds that he appears in a degraded light to thoſe to whoſe approbation he is not indifferent, he may reſolve to correct all his improper propenſities for the future. Let us, then, I ſay, leave Davers for a while to his own reflections.

I have made an inquiry after Oſwald, but can procure no intelligence about him. I only hear, that he, ſometimes, viſits Lady Juliet; I ſhall, therefore, return to town, and, with Kitty's aſſiſtance, try to perſuade Mrs. Davers, not only to pardon, but to overlook this change in her huſband.

LETTER XXXIV.

From the Same to the Same.

I Was welcomed, by Kitty, with a ſatisfaction which warmed my heart, and filled me, at firſt, with the moſt flattering hopes. Deluſive hopes! The entrance of Lord Hythe ſoon convinced me, that I had no encouragement to indulge them.

"What! is ſhe ſo far gone as to diſcover "a preference only upon his coming into the "room?"

No—but a little incident made the diſcovery.

Advancing to me with an unuſual ſerioufneſs in his countenance, he threw himſelf into a chair, and, leaning his head upon his hand, ſaid, that he was almoſt diſtracted with a pain in his face.

Kitty ſtarted and immediately ran to him—"What will you have, my Lord," cried ſhe, with the moſt undiſſembled tenderneſs, "What "ſhall I do for you?"

"Nothing, my dear Miſs Oſwald," replied he, with looks and with accents which plainly proved that he was in great pain—"Nothing will "relieve

" relieve me. I had recourſe to ſeveral remedies " before I came out."

" You ſhould not have come out at all," anſwered ſhe, with a countenance in which impatience and anxiety were ſtrongly painted: " Let " me prevail on you to go home, and to have " ſome advice."

He ſtill refuſed, aſſuring her, that it would ſignify nothing; and *ſhe* continued to preſs him to comply with her intreaties.

I ſtood like the ſtatue of deſpair. I was in the ſituation of a man, who, having been waked from a dream of felicity, feels all thoſe misfortunes which oppreſſed his mind before he went to reſt.

Kitty, after having ſurveyed her *favourite*, while he ſat ſilent, becauſe too much in pain to ſpeak, at laſt turned to me, and ſeeing me gaze on her with looks which diſcovered, I ſuppoſe, all the emotions of my ſoul, fetched a deep ſigh—" Come, Mr. Shelburne," ſaid ſhe, " you had ſomething to tell me about your jour- " ney—will you ſit down?"

This little attention, which ſeemed to reſult entirely from pity, charmed me, as it gave me the ſincereſt, and the moſt forcible proof of the goodneſs of her heart.

We ſat down. I chatted upon as many ſubjects as I could think of to amuſe her, but I

was conſiderably reſtrained by the preſence of Lord Hythe: and I ſoon found that each of us was *acting a part*. Her eyes were, inceſſantly, directed to Lord Hythe, and I was too much diſturbed to ſee how affectionately ſhe was attached to him, to behave in the unembarraſſed manner I wiſhed to do.

He roſe, at length, and told Kitty he was better—"I will go home," added he, "and "try to get ſome reſt, having had none all "night."

Kitty's face was a little enlivened by that intelligence, he left her tolerably compoſed.

Mrs. Davers was not at home. Had *ſhe* been in the houſe, his Lordſhip, I imagine, would have ſhewn no inclination to take his leave.

When he was gone, and when I perceived that Kitty was more calm, I told her every thing that had paſſed between me and Mr. Davers.—"I wiſh," continued I, "that you would "perſuade your ſiſter not only to *forgive* but "to *forget:* I wiſh you would endeavour to "ſoften matters a little; but I would not have "you acquaint her with every particular, leſt "you ſhould, by ſo doing, heighten her re-"ſentment, and render our efforts to promote a "reconciliation fruitleſs.

Kitty

Kitty thanked me very cordially for taking ſo much trouble about their affairs; adding, that ſhe ſincerely wiſhed that ſhe could make her ſiſter ſenſible of the propriety of ſuch a behaviour as I had pointed out to her; that ſhe feared it would be a difficult matter to induce her to think as we did; and that ſhe fancied ſhe reſented Mr. Davers's behaviour too much to liſten to any healing meaſures.

"And do *you* think like your ſiſter?" replied I.

"Would *you* think well of me if I did?" anſwered ſhe, with a charming bluſh, which rendered her a thouſand times more lovely than ſhe was before.

"'Tis impoſſible to think of you but as you "are," ſaid I, paſſionately preſſing her hand to my lips, "you are every thing that is good and "amiable."

She withdrew her hand, but diſcovered no anger in her looks. Mrs. Davers came home ſoon afterwards; I then took my leave; not, however, till I had promiſed to go with them to Ranelagh to-morrow.

LETTER XXXV.

From the Same to the Same.

I Spent a very diſagreeable evening at Ranelagh: as Mrs. Davers and Miſs Oſwald had never ſeen that elegant ſpot, I imagined that it would have engroſſed their attention; but I was miſtaken. Lord Hythe, who is become of great conſequence in the eyes of the former, attracted her notice ſo much, that poor Kitty, I ſaw, trembled for her, leſt ſhe ſhould be guilty of any indiſcretions; and, indeed, I began to think that ſhe was ſeveral times on the brink of an impropriety. She watched all Hythe's motions, with a vigilance not at all to her credit, looked unhappy whenever ſhe ſaw him engaged with the ladies whom he met with, (and he found himſelf upon a very eaſy footing with half the ladies in the room) and diſcovered by every feature in her face, that ſhe wiſhed to confine his aſſiduities to herſelf. In ſhort, her envy and jealouſy became at laſt ſo extremely viſible, that poor Kitty's terrors on her account, though ſhe ſaid nothing, were doubled. I, therefore, feeling for them all, propoſed going home early; but I found it difficult to detach Mrs. Davers from Hythe, who could not on his

his ſide, eaſily break from the parties perpetually ſurrounding him. Mrs. Davers, at length, ſeemed determined to make a grand effort, to try if ſhe had influence enough to draw him from the fine women, whom he had followed. *They* ſcrupled not to tell him, that he ſhould go with them, as they could not do without him. *She* proceeded in a different, and a more ſucceſsful manner. She compoſed her features as well as ſhe could, and with a look which plainly ſhewed that her reſolution to retire was attended with reluctance on *his* account, made a modeſt curtſy, by way of taking leave of him for the night, calling upon her ſiſter, at the ſame time, to accompany her, who ſtood indeed cloſe at her elbow, ready to ſtart at the firſt motion. This *manœuvre* did the buſineſs: Lord Hythe immediately broke from his companions, and ſeizing her hand, cried, "Are you going, "Mrs. Davers? 'tis early, and the crowd is ſo "great, that you will not be able to get to "your coach." Lucy was firm, and telling him that her coach was already drawn up, moved towards the door. Hythe ſtill keeping her hand in his, conducted her to her carriage. I followed with Kitty.

In our ride home, Mrs. Davers ſpoke but little: ſhe was thoughtful and unhappy; nor did the

the renewed aſſiduities of Hythe render her leſs penſive. Kitty, attached to her ſiſter, felt all *her* uneaſineſs.

I wiſh that Davers would come to town. A *neglected* wife is a charge I have not been uſed to. I will take care never to have one of my own, for I will never marry any woman but Kitty Oſwald. For her dear ſake am I ſolicitous to preſerve her ſiſter's heart, perſon, and reputation, which are all at preſent, I think, endangered. The *firſt*, I fear, is gone, and who can tell how ſoon the others may follow?

LETTER XXXVI.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

YOU complain of my long ſilence, Nancy; but, indeed, what I have to ſay is ſo diſagreeable to myſelf, that I had rather ſuppreſs it.

Mr. Shelburne has behaved like a true friend: he has taken the trouble to go down to Beechwood, on purpoſe to endeavour to prevail on Mr. Davers to come home, and to reſolve to ſee Sally Pigot no more, after having made a proper ſettlement on her. Could any man have acted in a more laudable manner? But then, as

he

he has taken ſo much pains to be ſerviceable to my family, will he not expect more from me than it is in my power to grant? And yet he conducts himſelf with a delicacy which ſeems to exact nothing. Ought I not be the more ready to ſhew my gratitude in return for his refined behaviour? Indeed, indeed, I think ſo, but I cannot bring myſelf to give my hand without my heart. I will be his friend, however, at all events, and he aſſures me that my friendſhip will, in ſome degree, compenſate for the want of that tenderneſs with which he wiſhes to inſpire me. Every day am I more and more convinced that ſenſibility is rather a misfortune than a ſatisfaction. My poor ſiſter will, I fear, fall a victim to hers. Dear Lucy! ſhe was I believe ignorant of the great ſhare of ſenſibility in her conſtitution, till the neglect of Mr. Davers, and the attentions of Lord Hythe made her acquainted with it.

We were at Ranelagh for the firſt time, laſt night: Lord Hythe was of our party, and exceedingly careſſed by the women who very much loſt themſelves, I thought, by diſtinguiſhing him, but the many ſtratagems they made uſe of to fix him in their ſeveral parties were ſo far ſucceſsful that *we* were, for a great while, deprived of his company. My poor ſiſter could not conceal her diſquiet on ſeeing him drawn away

away, from my penetrating eyes, *too* penetrating eyes, for ſurely, Nancy, one would not wiſh to ſee what gives one pain. Yet I could not help it. She never loſt ſight of him a moment, tho' the room was ſo crowded, and he was ſo perpetually ſtopped, and talked to, by different ſets of people, that I ſhould not have ſeen him ſo often had not *her* eager eyes pointed him out to me. You will ſmile at this, perhaps, Nancy, and tell me that I am an artful girl, and that I wiſh to hide my own faults, by expoſing the failings of others, but, as I told you before, it is no crime in me who am not married, and conſequently free to chuſe, to like Lord Hythe. I muſt own, however, that I think Lord Hythe would not make an eligible huſband: he is too much admired, too much courted. A woman in the leaſt inclined to be jealous cannot be happy with ſuch a man, becauſe ſhe will have no reaſon to expect him to be diveſted of that vanity which general admiration naturally inſpires. I don't, indeed, pretend to be inſenſible to his lordſhip's attractions, but I hope I am not ſo bewitched with them as poor Lucy is, and yet her prepoſſeſſions cannot be meerly on account of his perſon. I will venture to aſſert, that if he had not been ſo uncommonly aſſiduous about her, ſhe never would have ſingled him out as an object worthy of her particular attention; nor would

would ſhe even then, if Davers had not left *her* for another. Reſentment againſt *one* man, and gratitude—let me not call it love—to another, have made her appear indiſcreet. Pray heaven ſhe may not be more indiſcreet than ſhe has been! She has not yet confeſſed her imprudent feelings to me, and I hope ſhe will be able to conquer them. When ſhe came home from Ranelagh ſhe was ſo entirely incapable of entering into any kind of chat, that I am ſure ſhe was very miſerable. Poſſibly ſhe was ſeverely pained by the conflict between inclination and duty. May the latter correct all the improper deſires of the former! There is, undoubtedly, no ſmall merit in ſtriving to controul our rebellious paſſions; and a victory will be doubly brilliant if it has been with difficulty obtained. I have a thouſand apprehenſions—I wiſh they may prove groundleſs—I feel myſelf wretched. Shelburne partakes of my affliction without owning, however, that he has diſcovered the cauſe of it.

LET-

LETTER XXXVII.

From the Same to the Same.

MY poor Lucy! Oh! Nancy, my heart is ready to break—my dear ſiſter!—what will become of her?

Finding that ſhe did not come down to breakfaſt, when I had written my laſt letter, I went into her dreſſing-room, and found her eyes bathed in tears.

Willing to ſuppoſe that her tears might have been occaſioned by Mr. Davers's neglect, I offered to ſay ſomething about it by way of conſolation, tho' I did not imagine I ſhould adminiſter any to her, by that mode of proceeding. But how was I hurt when ſhe cried, "I do not "think of *that*—would I had nothing elſe to "torment me!"

"What, my dear," ſaid I, "can be put "in competition with your huſband's indiffe-"rence?"

Here I ſtopped, fancying I had ſaid too much.

She bluſhed, ſighed, and hung her head. "Oh Kitty, Kitty! *you* are a good innocent "girl, and do not know—pray heaven you "may

"may never be acquainted with your ſiſter's "ſorrows!"

I was going to demand an explanation of her words, when Lord Hythe entered the room, without having been announced.

She ſtarted—looked pale and red, alternately; her handkerchief dropped from her hand upon the floor. While he was picking it up ſhe wiped her eyes with another which lay on the table, and tried to compoſe herſelf.

He looked earneſtly at her, took her hand gently, and with a voice tenderly ſoftened, aſked her what new grief ſo deeply affected her.

Catching away her hand in a hurry, ſhe replied, "None at all."

He appeared, I thought, rather diſconcerted at this anſwer, and at the manner in which it was delivered. He ſat down ſomewhat embarreſſed; however, ſoon making an effort to recover himſelf, he ſaid, "How did you like "Ranelagh laſt night, ladies?"

Before I could ſpeak, my ſiſter replied, "Not "in the leaſt, I hate ſuch a crowd; my ſpirits "were exceſſively fatigued."

"A crowd is rather troubleſome, undoubt-"edly," ſaid, my Lord.

"Troubleſome?—'tis intolerable; to be ſe-"perated every moment from one's company is

"to

" to me deteſtable beyond all things;—but, per-
" haps, your lordſhip, who by having ſo ex-
" tenſive an acquaintance can never be at a
" loſs for converſation, may find it very plea-
" ſant."

Theſe words were uttered in a reproachful tone, and were accompanied with looks which filled me with concern. Lord Hythe, to whom her ſpeech was ſtrongly directed, took it immediately to himſelf, and made a very ſubmiſſive apology for having quitted her ſo often to ſpeak to other people.

She too readily accepted of his apology, and gave him encouragement to renew his aſſiduities, and he renewed them in ſo artful a manner, and behaved with ſuch a reſpectful tenderneſs, that her little jealouſy was immediately baniſhed; her eyes ſparkled, her colour returned, and ſhe looked and breathed nothing but pleaſure.

Where will this end? How I wiſh for Mr. Davers's return! I did not leave them. When my Lord went I longed for an opportunity to hint my fears about his going too far; but being apprehenſive, at the ſame time, that I might be ſuſpected of envy or jealouſy, I found my tongue chained up. I will conſult Mr. Shelburne; he is our common friend; yet by communicating

my

my apprehenſions I ſhall, inevitably, expoſe my ſiſter.——What muſt I do? How greatly am I perplexed!

Adieu.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the Same to the Same.

YOU were right, Nancy: Mr. Shelburne ſaw plainly what, indeed, was too viſible. A hint was ſufficient, and he kindly offered to go down once more to Beechwood, and to endeavour to bring up Mr. Davers; deſiring me to do all in my power, during his abſence, to convince my ſiſter how abſolutely neceſſary it was for her to receive her huſband as if nothing had happened. I talked to her accordingly upon this ſubject, very ſeriouſly, after his departure, but to very little purpoſe. She replied, "That "ſuch groſs treatment, ſo ſoon after her mar-"riage, ought to be reſented; and that if it "was overlooked it would be repeated."

In anſwer to this reply, I mentioned ſeveral women who had entirely reclaimed their huſbands by their mildneſs, patience, and ſubmiſſion.

"Ay,"

"Ay," replied ſhe, "it may be ſo. But, "when you are married, Kitty, you won't "think as you do now, moſt probably you "will think exactly as I do. Had Mr. Da-"vers ſtaid till I was grown old or ugly, or "even till we had been married ſeveral years, "ſome excuſe might have been made for "him: but to leave me in the bloom of "youth, and with beauty enough to procure "admiration—no apology can be found for "his behaviour."

In this manner does ſhe always anſwer me. She ſets too high a value upon her perſon. Now, I really believe, that there is not near ſo much in beauty as we women generally imagine. And we ought not, therefore, to be over ſolicitous about it. I have often thought that we ſpend too much of our time at our toilets. Beauty is but the flower of a day. Why then do men ever chuſe wives for their perſonal charms? Thoſe who marry only for *ſuch* charms, muſt aſſuredly be diſappointed: doubly diſappointed will be the woman who fondly flatters herſelf that ſhe ſhall be as much beloved as ever by her huſband, when her perſon, which firſt attracted him, ceaſes to allure him, if ſhe has

has no beauties of a more durable nature to engage his attention. How can *ſhe* expect to keep the affections of her huſband, who is perpetually apprehenſive of having her perſon ſpoiled by ſickneſs, who is afraid to go out in the wind and the ſun, leſt her complexion ſhould be injured, and who is continually ſtudying how to preſerve her ſhape in a nice medium, between the too large or too ſmall? How can *ſhe* expect to appear truly amiable in her huſband's eyes, who has no charms but her *perſonal* ones? A woman who is a ſlave to her beauty, who takes no pains to embelliſh her mind, is not only a miſerable, but a ridiculous creature. What a contemptible appearance does ſuch a woman make, when, in ſpite of the ravages of old age, ſhe ſticks cloſe to her waſhes and her paint! How diſguſting! If every woman who *has been* handſome would, in the winter of life, be contented to live in retirement with a few ſelect friends about her, ſhe would be a reſpectable character. She might make herſelf revered: but to ſee a ſuperannuated toaſt exhibiting herſelf in all public places, languiſhing with black-luſtre eyes, and expoſing a forehead not to be ſmoothed by the hand of art, who can help feeling both pity and contempt? She at once excites compaſſion and ridicule. But are you not

tired

tired with my reflections, Nancy? Indeed I begin to grow weary of them myſelf.

LETTER XXXIX.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

AT the inſtigation of Kitty, I am come, once more, in ſearch of Davers: the dear girl was terrified to think of the conſequences which might poſſibly ariſe from Lord Hythe's attachment to her ſiſter, and from Davers's abſence; I, therefore, ſet out immediately. Could I ſee the woman I doat on unhappy, without endeavouring to relieve her?

Davers did not expect me again, I am ſure: he behaved, however, better than I could have expected: he even ſaid that he was glad to ſee me: in reply, I aſked him how Sally Pigot did.

"Fie, Shelburne," anſwered he, ſpare your "friend: but, indeed, poor Sally has been very "ill: Mrs. Davers's jealouſy gave a prodigious "ſhock to her ſpirits: ſhe is better, and has "brought me a fine boy. You may give me "joy if you pleaſe."

"I do

"I do *not* pleaſe," replied I: "you very "much ſurprize me, by rejoicing at an event "which ſhould fill you with remorſe and con- "cern."

"We ſtill differ widely in our notions I ſee," ſaid he.

I then repeated what I had before mentioned to him, about his neglect of his wife, and about the continuance of his attachment to Miſs Pigot, advancing many more reaſons to thoſe I had already urged, to prevail on him, as ſhe was ſafely delivered of her ſon, to leave her to repent of her paſt follies. "You cannot," added I, "endeavour to make her ſenſible of the "impropriety of her paſt conduct at a more "convenient time. Having ſuffered ſo much "from her indiſcretions, and indeed, criminal "proceedings, ſhe may be the more eaſily in- "duced to reflect ſeriouſly, morally, and reli- "giouſly upon her ſituation in this world; and "if you can bring her to wiſh that ſhe had acted "in another manner, you may be of conſidera- "ble ſervice to her by making her willing to "ſpend the remainder of her days meritoriouſly. "The welfare of her child, for whom ſhe "muſt now feel ſenſations altogether new, ſen- "ſations of the ſofteſt kind, will ſurely oblige "her to reflect upon the comfort of ſeeing ſome "ſort of proviſion for him: by offering, there- "fore,

" fore, to take care of him juſt at this time, " you will, I imagine, have great influence over " her, as ſhe cannot poſſibly provide for him " herſelf, and render her deſirous of diſcontinu- " ing a connection which cannot with the leaſt " prudence be kept up; for, ſhould your affair " with Sally go on, Mrs. Davers will naturally " become more and more diſcontented, and the " poor girl too will feel her unhappineſs increaſ- " ed. She certainly has ſenſe enough to know, " that while ſhe is connected with you, ſhe in- " jures herſelf as well as Mrs. Davers. Reflect " then, a little, my dear Ned, and for your " own, your wife's, even for Sally's happineſs, " and her child's, return to town. Abſence from " this little ſeducer — for I believe, my friend, " that you would not have flown from your " Lucy, if you had not met with very great " encouragement from this girl — Abſence, I ſay, " and the conſciouſneſs of acting right, will " reſtore you to that felicity which you enjoy- " ed when you were firſt married; and every " body, who hears of your re-attachment to " Mrs. Davers, will applaud your conduct."

The inſinuation towards the latter part of my addreſs to him, with regard to Sally's encouragement, gave him, I perceived, no ſmall pleaſure. How dearly do we love to leſſen our faults by making others acceſſary to them!

He

He ſhook me by the hand, told me that I was a worthy fellow, and added, that he would conſider of what I had communicated. He then began to talk of other things. I'll ſtick cloſe to him now, if poſſible, till I have accompliſhed my deſign. As ſoon as I can prudently venture to depend upon ſucceſs, I will write a few lines to Kitty to alleviate her anxiety.

LETTER XL.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Miſs OSWALD.

EVER eager to give the ſmalleſt degree of ſatisfaction to Miſs Oſwald, I ſeize this moment to tell her, that I have now ſome hopes of my friend's returning to his family with new pleaſure. The attachment which has occaſioned ſo much uneaſineſs to you, and which has made ſo many diſcoveries in your favour, by making me acquainted with the ſtrength of your mind, and the ſweetneſs of your temper, is, I believe, almoſt diſſolved. To do every thing in his power to make Miſs Oſwald happy in any ſhape, will be the perpetual ſtudy of

Her devoted
Humble ſervant,
CHARLES SHELBURNE.

LETTER XLI.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

BY a letter from Mr. Shelburne, which I received yeſterday, I am informed, that there are hopes of Mr. Davers's coming to town. I have left nothing unſaid to prevail on my ſiſter to receive him as if nothing had happened; but I can get no ſatisfactory promiſe from her. She appears, to my great concern, more pleaſed with Lord Hythe than ever.

We have been at Ranelagh twice ſince Mr. Shelburne left us: Lord Hythe was in our firſt and in our ſecond party, and made my ſiſter ſufficient amends for his former neglect, by keeping cloſe to her ſide the whole evening, though all the fine women there ſtrove to draw him to themſelves. *She* was, alſo, vaſtly admired by moſt of the men; and, indeed, I never ſaw her look ſo gay, nor ſo handſome: for my own part, I was the graveſt creature in the place, and I was rallied by ſeveral ſmart fellows for the ſolemnity of my appearance upon a ſpot devoted to pleaſure; but I could not bring myſelf to be chearful. I wiſhed, a thouſand times, I had been at home. My ſiſter will not hear of my returning, and, to ſay truth, I am almoſt afraid to leave her alone, under the dominion of a paſſion,

ſion, which may, perhaps, render her wretched for life. However, I will not deſpair. If Mr. Davers comes back with affectionate feelings, all may be well. How much are we obliged to Mr. Shelburne for intereſting himſelf ſo warmly in our affairs! I have not yet anſwered his letter —I think I ought to do it, and *ſhould* did I not expect him, every hour in town.

I have juſt received a packet from my mother, who, a ſecond time, makes an enquiry after Charles. He has not been with us. I cannot, therefore, give her the leaſt information concerning him.

Adieu.

LETTER XLII.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

Beechwood.

I Cannot yet leave Beechwood: I would not willingly leave it, tho' I am impatient to ſee Kitty, without Davers. He ſtill wavers, but I hope I ſhall carry my point: a point which may probably, make me for ever unhappy, for when Davers is reconciled to his wife, Lord Hythe, who prefers Kitty to every woman, except her ſiſter, will then, undoubtedly, attach himſelf to *her*. Yet, if *that* attachment renders her happy I ſhall have the ſatisfaction to

think that I have been in ſome meaſure inſtrumental to her felicity. With *that* ſatisfaction I muſt try to make myſelf contented.

Here is another myſterious affair. Charles Oſwald is always lurking about Beechwood, yet he never makes actual viſits to it: he ſeems deſirous of ſhunning both Davers and me. Kitty uſed to tell me, when I was in town, that Mr. and Mrs. Oſwald were very uneaſy at his long abſence from them; eſpecially as neither of his ſiſters could give any account of him. I ſuppoſe he dangles after lady Juliet; I will find out his haunts if I can: I would be ſerviceable to every creature breathing who has the ſlighteſt connection with my dear Kitty tho' ſhe has not, yet condeſcended to anſwer my letter.

LETTER XLIII.

From the Same to the Same.

THE very perſon who has all along given us ſo much diſquiet will, at length, be the only one to reſtore our tranquillity.

Sally Pigot has been ſo much affected with the pains ſhe has endured, and the dangerous condition into which ſhe has, ſhe imagines, been thrown, that her melancholy reflections have, apparently, produced, penitential ſentiments. She has poſitively refuſed to look upon Davers again,

again, (according to his own intelligence) in the light of a lover. I do not want to make the ſmalleſt deduction from her penitence, yet I am ſtrongly inclined to believe that a certain degree of coldneſs on *his* ſide, has contributed to her contrition. But if Mrs. Davers finds her huſband's affection for her renewed, it matters not how he was diſengaged from Sally, nor what occaſioned *her* reformation. I now actually think that Mrs. Davers was always the miſtreſs of my indiſcreet friend's heart, and that he only amuſed himſelf with Miſs Pigot for a little variety. He has, however, reſolved to ſettle a hundred a year upon *her* and her child, as he had firſt ſeduced her from the paths of virtue, leſt, being totally unable to ſupport herſelf, and not capable —having been genteelly educated—to work for a ſubſiſtence, idleneſs, or pride, may tempt her to acquire a livelihood by proſtitution. How many poor girls are there who, for the abovementioned reaſons, are obliged to remain in an infamous courſe of life, perhaps very diſagreeable to them, becauſe they have not been brought up to provide for themſelves by their own labour, and becauſe they are alſo aſhamed to be induſtrious! The man, therefore, who leaves a genteelly educated girl in a neceſſitous ſituation, after having ſeduced her, is doubly criminal; when he has made her infamous, it

is ſurely incumbent on him to keep her out of the gripe of poverty. The way to bring young people back to virtue is to remove from them all temptations to do evil. But we cannot anſwer for ourſelves; how then can we anſwer for other people? I will not leave Beechwood till this affair is concluded.

A letter from Kitty—the dear, dear girl!—What a pretty running hand!—ſmall, but how elegant! as it is but ſhort, I will tranſcribe it. Poſſibly you will ſee nothing extraordinary in it—you cannot, indeed, read it with *my* feelings. You will, probably, wiſh to ſee the *original*—I would not part with it for the richeſt diamond that was ever imported. The mereſt trifle from thoſe we love charms us.

LETTER XLIV.

Miſs OSWALD to Mr. SHELBURNE.

MR. Shelburne's obliging letter would ſooner have been acknowledged had I not expected every hour to have ſeen him in London. What thanks are not due to him for the friendly care he takes of our affairs! yet I am not without my apprehenſions. However, as I am perfectly ſatisfied that nothing will be wanting on *his* part, I take this opportunity to expreſs my grateful ſenſe of his kind endeavours to reſtore

happineſs

happineſs to our family; endeavours which will ever be, with the ſincereſt pleaſure, remembered by

His moſt humble ſervant,

C. OSWALD.

LETTER XLV.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

TIS done——Davers has taken leave—his laſt leave, I hope—of Sally. The parting, he tells me, was extremely affecting. He has honeſtly confeſſed that I have made him wiſh he never had been engaged in ſuch a diſhonourable affair. I was glad to hear him make ſuch a confeſſion, and I flatter myſelf that what he has felt on Miſs Pigot's account, will prevent him from endeavouring to ſeduce any other of her ſex. I am now only afraid that Mrs. Davers will not receive her huſband in the manner I could wiſh; yet I am very ſure that my beſt Kitty, my ſweeteſt girl, has done every thing in her power to prepare her for his return to her. Where is there ſuch a girl as Kitty?

I have met with her brother Charles: every body in any ſhape connected with *her* is, neceſſarily, entitled to *my* attention. I ſtopped him, and with a friendly earneſtneſs aſked him where he reſided, what detained him in that part of

the country, and what hindered him from coming from Beechwood.

He looked embarraſſed, and heſitated for ſome time. On my aſſuring him I would make no diſcoveries which ſhould be diſagreeable to him, he, with a ſmile which made me almoſt believe that I was ſpeaking to Kitty, replied, "I have an apartment at a farm-houſe juſt "by."

"On purpoſe to be near Lady Juliet," ſaid I. "Come, come, Charles,"—ſeeing him bluſh— "don't be afraid of me, I will do what I can to "ſerve you. I am no ſtranger to your attach- "ment here; and, in truth, Charles a hand- "ſome, rich widow, with a large jointure is an "object worthy of your notice. You do right "to purſue her."

"She will never reward me for my purſuit," ſaid he.

"Nay, now you are in jeſt, the widow is "handſome, *you* are not leſs ſo, and, therefore "why ſhould you be diſheartened?"

"Becauſe all my efforts to pleaſe her are "unſucceſsful."

"I am ſorry you are ſo unſucceſsful a lover," anſwered I: "but indeed, I can ſcarce believe "you, as I myſelf, was witneſs to the lady's be- "haviour to you, one day, when you little "thought I was ſo near."

Charles,

Charles, imagining from this ſpeech that I had ſeen them lately toget. er, cried out, eagerly, "And do you really think that ſhe "loves me?"

"Do I! ay, undoubtedly, and are you ſuch "a novice as not to have found it out, or do "you only affect ignorance to *me?*"

"No—by all that's dear to me I ſwear that "tho' I have been encouraged to follow her, "tho' I have been kindly received, I have not "yet been able to arrive at a certainty of being "beloved."

I then told him, I was afraid he had met with a downright flirt, and adviſed him to break off all connections with her immediately.

"Your advice is not ſo eaſily to be follow-"ed," replied he, "eſpecially as the object is "ſo very alluring. I have, a hundred times, "endeavoured to leave her, and I have told her "as often, that I would never return, but there "is ſomething ſo lovely in her form, ſo bewitch-"ing in her manner that I could never keep my "word. She always, on my coming back to "her, welcomed me in ſo winning a way, that "I grew more and more fond of her. To give "you an inſtance of her attractive carriage. "My father, after having written to me often "at Cambridge, ſuppoſing me to be there,

" without receiving any anſwer, directed his en-
" quiries after me to my ſiſter's in town: how-
" ever, as he got no information about me from
" *them*, he left an angry letter for me at college
" for my peruſal on my return. As ſoon as it
" came to my hands I anſwered it, aſſuring him
" that I had only been upon a party of pleaſure,
" and that I ſhould be more attentive to my
" ſtudies for the future. Yet tho' I had made
" that promiſe, I found myſelf ſtrongly tempt-
" ed to break it: in a few days I ſtole away to
" my old haunts. As I had told lady Juliet
" when I left her, that I knew not when I
" ſhould ſee her again, ſhe affected to be angry
" with me; and her anger made me bear the
" ſeparation with more fortitude than I expect-
" ed; but when I entered her apartment, I be-
" held her quite in a diſhabille, pale and dejected;
" a faint bluſh—as I afterwards diſcovered it to
" be—overſpread her face at my entrance. She
" trembled, and when I took her by the hand
" ſhe burſt into tears. I ſtarted, and let her
" hand drop, imagining ſhe was offended, but
" as there appeared no ſigns of her diſpleaſure,
" I began to think ſhe was diſſatisfied with me
" for quitting it, and therefore ſeized it again,
" demanding at the ſame time the cauſe of her
" affliction." " You miſtake me, Oſwald,"
ſaid ſhe, " and you have been in an error ever
" ſince

"ſince the commencement of our acquaintance.
"I am neither afflicted nor angry, but tranſ-
"ported to ſee that you have been better than
"your word, for you told me at your departure
"that you would never come to me again."
Imagine my raptures at this charming confeſ-
ſion which made me more eager to be aſſured
that they were well grounded. In conſequence
of that eagerneſs I took *ſome* ſteps to know
whether I ſhould actually be as happy with her
as I longed to be. She repulſed me as uſual.
"Is it poſſible, Oſwald," continued ſhe, "that
"you can offer to ſeduce the woman for whom
"you have often profeſſed the ſincereſt eſteem?
"and ought I ever to look upon the man who
"only dares to ſuppoſe that I will ſuffer him to
"take unwarrantable liberties?"—What am I
"to expect then?" cried I. "Your ſuperiority
"to me, in point of fortune, forbids me to
"entertain a hope of your marrying a man with
"little or nothing: my love excludes all merce-
"nary views: with you yourſelf, lady Juliet,
"and not with your rank, or with your for-
"tune, am I enamoured. Is it not hard, there-
"fore, that I ſhould for ever be deprived of the
"bleſſing which I ſo ardently ſigh for, becauſe
"there is an accidental diſparity in our ſitua-
"tions?" "You are too impatient, Oſwald,"
replied ſhe; "could I but prevail on you to mo-

"derate

"derate your paſſions we might yet be happy; "you are unreaſonable, you will have all or "nothing." "Were I but ſure of any thing," ſaid I, "you would ſee me very contented." "Well then, I will try you by allowing you "every innocent freedom you can deſire; and "if, after ſuch an allowance, you can preſume "to take advantage of my condeſcenſion we "muſt part *for ever*." "O recall thoſe horrrid "words, my angel," ſaid I, ſqueezing the hand to my lips which I ſtill held, "I will be all you "wiſh me; I will wait with patience till you "think fit to make me completely bleſt—only "tell me if I may reckon upon your feelings in "my favour, and by what motives you are urged "to poſtpone my happineſs" "Be ſatisfied, "Oſwald," anſwered ſhe, with my ſwearing "that you, and you alone, ſhall, one day, "take poſſeſſion of all that is in my power to "beſtow. I have had great offers but I will "never marry any man except yourſelf while "*you* continue faithfully attached to *me*." This is all I have been able to draw from her; yet has ſhe not given me ſufficient encouragement to devote myſelf entirely to *her*, Mr. Shelburne, and would you not act as I do, encouraged in the ſame manner by the idol of your heart?

"I can't

"I can't tell," replied I,—"this is a point "which requires *ſome* conſideration. If your "miſtreſs was a young, innocent girl, her dila- "torineſs might proceed from modeſty, and from "her apprehenſions with regard to the approba- "tion of her family; but her Ladyſhip is, I "imagine, too well experienced in the manage- "ment of an amour, to feel any aukward em- "barraſſments with her lover: and, to ſay "truth, I cannot help imputing the capriciouſ- "neſs of her behaviour to you, to coquetry. "Many, and many a ſighing fellow, as young "and as handſome as yourſelf, Oſwald, has "been drawn in to become an abſolute dangler "to a fine women, and diſmiſſed at laſt (on her "growing weary of feeding him, from time to "time, with falſe hopes) with a loud laugh." "*There are* ſuch women, Sir," continued I, obſerving my young man with his eyes opened wide, and with his face full of amazement, "*there are* ſuch women in the world; let me "adviſe you, then, to arm yourſelf againſt "their inſinuating arts. If I can be of any "ſervice to you, you may command me freely; "and do not be offended at my harbouring ſuſ- "picions about Lady Juliet, and imagining "that ſhe only amuſes herſelf a little at your "expence. I am very ſenſible, that a ſuppoſi- "tion of this kind is extremely mortifying to a

"handſome

"handſome young fellow"—ſeeing him look diſconcerted—"but I think it my duty, as a "friend, to put you upon your guard. You "are, I know, poſſeſſed of great ſenſibility, "and when once a man feels his heart warmed "with a ſincere paſſion for a captivating woman, "he cannot, without much difficulty, diſengage "himſelf from his attachment to her."

I accompanied my advice with new profeſſions of friendſhip, which were very ſincere, becauſe I thought it wanted ſome qualifying ſupplements. He looked rather haughtily at me, at firſt, as if my free admonitions had been offenſive, but at the concluſion of my well-intended ſpeech, he, with a faint ſmile, thanked me, civilly, for the hints I had addreſſed to him, though I ſaw clearly that he gave no credit to them. Of what conſequence is the ſociety of the fair ſex to ours! The converſation of ſenſible, polite women, tends to make the men who aſſociate with them, a thouſand times more agreeable than they would otherwiſe be, by giving a ſoftneſs to their manners, and by humanizing their paſſions: on the other hand, if with their ſenſe and their politeneſs, they are alſo of a looſe diſpoſition, of a voluptuous complexion, what an infinite deal of unhappineſs do they occaſion in the world! When a young fellow falls into the way of *ſuch* women, and has not

not fortitude enough to reſiſt their ſeducing arts, he inſenſibly acquires a taſte for ſenſual pleaſure, and by that taſte is incapacitated from enjoying the pure and permanent delights ariſing from chaſte connections. My young friend, Charles, is, I think, as happily formed as his ſiſter is, to reliſh domeſtic felicity: he ſeems to be the very man to render a woman bleſt with a huſband. I cannot but wiſh, therefore, that he may ſtand firm againſt all thoſe allurements which are commonly productive of ſenſations unfavourable to that ſtate, in which, according to my opinion, true happineſs between the ſexes can only be expected.

I actually feel myſelf ſo much intereſted in every thing belonging to my Kitty, that I vehemently deſire to prevent her brother from being thrown into any diſagreeable dilemmas. I ſhall be in town in a few days. I am ſorry to find that you will not favour us with *your* company, and with Mrs. Hepburne's at Beechwood, agreeably to your promiſe. Your reſpectable appearance, my friend, might, poſſibly, lay ſome very proper reſtrictions upon the ſingular behaviour of the too attractive Hythe. The propriety of Mrs. Hepburne's carriage would, I am ſure, have conſiderable weight with Mrs. Davers, as ſhe always profeſſes the higheſt

eſteem

eſteem for her, and indeed looks upon her with a kind of veneration.

I am, my dear Hepburne,
Yours, as uſual,
CHARLES SHELBURNE.

LETTER XLVI.

From the Same to the Same.

London.

I Would not return to London till I ſaw Davers ready to accompany me. I was afraid to leave him behind me, leſt he might be tempted to take a ſecond farewell of Sally. More *laſt adieus* might have precluded all hopes of a ſeparation, which is now, I flatter myſelf, accompliſhed.

I wiſh I could ſay, that Mrs. Davers received her fugitive in the manner I expected. Kitty did every thing in her power to pave the way for the kindeſt reception. The amiable girl met me on my entrance with her brother. He haſtily paſſed her with a good humoured, "how do "you?" She then ran to *me*, and ſuffered me to take her hands in mine; even to kiſs them both with tranſport; thanking me, at the ſame time for bringing Mr. Davers back.

Before I could reply, he returned to us, and calling to a ſervant, aſked him where his miſtreſs was.

"Above

"Above ſtairs, Sir."

He then hurried from me again, and met Mrs. Davers in the back parlour. He ran to her, caught her in his arms, and kiſſed her with great fondneſs.

His endearments were not, I thought, received as they ſhould have been. She made not the leaſt effort to return them. He gazed on her with a ſatisfaction, apparently, unaffected, and only ſaid, "So cold, Lucy, after ſo long a "ſeparation!"

"I hope you have been well, Sir," replied ſhe, with a reſerved air.

Imagining that my preſence would prevent a free converſation between them, I made my bow, and went back to look for Kitty. By *her* I was informed, after having told her I had hoped Mrs. Davers would have diſcovered more joy at the ſight of her huſband, that ſhe with the greateſt difficulty, prevailed on her to ſhew no reſentment. This ſilly woman, for ſilly ſhe certainly is, with her ill-timed pride, will undo all that I have been doing for her. Many a woman has but *one* critical moment in her life, on which her happineſs depends, and many a woman throws that moment, imprudently, away.

Kitty, the gentle, good-natured Kitty, felt the impropriety of her ſiſter's behaviour, and lamented it, but ſaid nothing to me concerning the

the latent cauſe of it. However, I ſoon found that Lord Hythe had availed himſelf of Davers's negligence. I hinted my ſuſpicions to Kitty, though with all poſſible delicacy. She ſhook her head—"I fear," replied ſhe, "that my "ſiſter, long diſguſted at Mr. Davers's incon- "ſtancy, has not yet been able to bring herſelf "to treat him with her former tenderneſs: but "I am willing to believe that ſhe only looks upon "Lord Hythe as the friend of her huſband. "He was firſt recommended to her by Mr. Da- "vers, and as he has been very attentive to her "in his abſcence, ſhe diſtinguiſhes him, perhaps, "for his uncommon politeneſs, more than ſhe "does any other gentleman; yet, indeed, Mr. "Shelburne, I cannot think ſhe means any harm "by her carriage to him."

Sweet, good girl! how affectionately does ſhe endeavour to hide the failings of her ſiſter, even from the man who will not, ſhe is aſſured, for *her* dear ſake, expoſe them! But I ſee—I am ſurprized at Davers's blindneſs—that Hythe has made a conſiderable impreſſion upon her heart. His influence over it is greater, I fancy, than ſhe herſelf imagines it is. Yet I hope that ſhe will, reflecting properly on the recovery of her huſband's affection, make uſe of every ſoft, inſinuating art to regain it.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

MR. Davers has been come to town ſome time, my Nancy. I ſhould have communicated this piece of news to you before, had it been productive of the good effects I had ſo long wiſhed from it; but my ſiſter has now taken it into her head to play the *indifferent*, and conſequently throws a damp upon all her huſband's returning tenderneſs. Fain would I perſuade myſelf that nothing but a little reſentment lurking in her breaſt, added to a deſire to increaſe his paſſion to ſuch a height as to make him immutably attached to her, has occaſioned her diſcouraging behaviour: yet I fear there is another reaſon (indeed, my Nancy I am not jealous) gratitude, or a more tender paſſion, which I will not name, actuates her. I am certain, however, that all the aſſiduities conceivable, all the ſighs, tears, and proteſtations in the world, could not have alienated her affections had ſhe not been firſt aggrieved. I do not attempt, by ſaying ſo, to apologize for her conduct. While we are undeſervedly unfortunate we may ſupport ourſelves with ſome degree of fortitude, becauſe we muſt be ſenſible that no mortal is exempt from affliction; but when we have

have brought the calamities of which we complain upon ourſelves, and have recourſe to indiſcreet meaſures to remove them, how can we rationally expect to be relieved under the preſſure of them? We ſhould alſo conſider that cuſtom has allowed men ſuch liberties that a married woman cannot well expreſs her diſapprobation of them without deviating from the delicacy of her ſex, without leſſening herſelf extremely at the ſame time, in the eyes of her huſband. But what is all this to the purpoſe? I cannot make Mrs. Davers think as I do. I have ſtill *one* conſolation left; my brother does not ſee with *my* eyes. I may be miſtaken. I am ſure he is diſpleaſed with my ſiſter's coolneſs to him, yet he does not in the leaſt ſuſpect her of the ſlighteſt partiality for any other man: he really thinks he has been to blame with regard to his late connection, and would willingly make amends for the errors he has committed. Now then is the moment for his reformation to be compleated, now, as he ſeems ſo ready to return with all thoſe affectionate ſenſations which he firſt felt for his Lucy. May ſhe ſeize *this moment*, and be happy!

Mr. Shelburne has behaved in the moſt friendly manner, and has diſcovered the ſincereſt regard for our whole family upon this, and every other

other occaſion. Would it were in my power to make acknowledgments adequate to the obligations we are under to him: obligations of which nobody here is ſenſible but myſelf.

I am,
My dear Nancy,
Your very faithful—
I wiſh I could add
Happy — friend,
C. O.

LETTER XLVIII.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

WE are by no means here as I wiſh we were. Davers has, I believe, quite loſt his wife's heart. How very fooliſh is the former to riſque his happineſs in this manner! How weak is the latter to act with a total inattention to her real felicity! To ſtate the caſe fairly—Davers, we will ſuppoſe has behaved unpardonably; nay, we will ſuppoſe that he has, perſonally, ill-treated his wife. But what will *ſhe* get by reſiſtance, or by making repriſals? Nothing. — Yes, ſhe will make her huſband heartily hate her, and draw upon herſelf the contempt of the world. On the contrary, ſhould this huſband be ever ſo inconſtant, will her aſſiduities to another man bring him back again?

again? Will he not rather be more determined to purſue his pleaſures abroad? eſpecially when he finds that ſhe pays no regard to her reputation, and that ſhe, by gratifying her own taſte, diſcovers an extreme indifference concerning his conſtancy. Here however, my friend, though I do not think Davers's rambling excuſable, the generality of the world will look upon it with leſs ſeverity. "He ſteps out of the regular road "a little, juſt to amuſe himſelf with a new ob-"ject, and gives his wife an opportunity to "divert *herſelf*, in the mean time." Such will be the language of the many.

Mrs. Davers not only comes down after her huſband, frightens his girl, and quarrels with him, but when he returns to her on the wings of love, ſullenly averts her head, and pays all her civilities to another. Happily, Davers has not yet penetrated into this laſt notable piece of female revenge: and I cannot tell whether his want of penetration will be of any diſſervice to him in the end. Having no ſuſpicions about Lord Hythe, he has moſt cordially re-invited him to ſpend the ſummer at Beechwood. Mrs. Davers and her lover will then have frequent opportunities to be by themſelves; and I fear that their ſtolen interviews will be enjoyed with mutual ſatisfaction.

Poor

Poor Kitty is in agonies at the thoughts of their being eternally together; and yet I do not ſee what can be done to prevent their *téte-à-têtes*. I can prevent them, indeed, by opening Davers's eyes; but it will be cruel to make him acquainted with his unhappy ſituation: and to ſuffer Mrs. Davers to go on, undiſturbed, with her indiſcretions, will be—in ſhort, I am exceedingly perplexed—I know not how to conduct ſo delicate an affair.

Kitty has talked to her ſiſter frequently, and adviſed her to a kinder behaviour to her huſband in vain; her ſiſterly admonitions have not been attended with any ſucceſs. She has not yet ventured to mention Hythe. "I would not wil-"lingly," ſaid ſhe to me, a little while ago, "put things into Mr. Davers's head which never "have, perhaps, entered into it."

The ſweet girl bluſhed while ſhe ſpoke.

I underſtood her, "Don't be abaſhed, my dear Kitty," replied I, taking her hand, "I "am very ſenſible that your affection for your "ſiſter takes place of your inclination for any "man; but you cannot err in giving her a hint "that her partiality for Hythe muſt be, inevita-"bly, taken notice of; and tho' you really be-"lieve that ſhe means not to favour him parti-"cularly, yet, as ſuch a conduct is very liable

"to

" to a miſconſtruction, you, as a fond ſiſter, may, " with great propriety, intreat her to be more " guarded in her carriage to him."

" Thankee, Mr. Shelburne," ſaid the grateful girl, " but as I have diſcovered ſo ill-placed " a partiality, myſelf, ſhall I not, by admoniſh- " ing my ſiſter, as you would have me, expoſe " myſelf to *her* reprehenſions?"

Her ſweet face was more deeply tinged than before. How I revered her! How delicate was her ſenſibility!

" Not at all," anſwered I, as ſoon I could ſpeak, ſo tumultuous were the emotions which ſhe had excited in my boſom. " No, you have " never diſcovered the ſlighteſt impropriety in " your behaviour to Lord Hythe, nobody but a " man ſo much in love with you as myſelf could " ever have found out the preference you ſecretly " give him."

" Oh! you flatterer," cried ſhe, with a ſmile, half averting her glowing face. Then, turning to me with a charming compoſure added, " Do " tell me, Mr. Shelburne—do, tell me ſincere- " ly, have I never expoſed myſelf to any body " but to you, from whom I ought moſt careful- " ly to have concealed the feelings of my heart, " becauſe I fear,"—(looking at me with the gentleſt compaſſion) " that I may have given

" uneaſineſs

"uneaſineſs to the man moſt deſerving of my "eſteem? Yet to whom, Mr. Shelburne, can "I unboſom myſelf with ſo much freedom as "to *you*, whoſe ſtrong underſtanding, exqui- "ſite ſenſibility, and refined way of think- "ing"—

"Stop, ſtop, my deareſt girl," cried I, claſp- ing her to my breaſt in ſpite of all her modeſt efforts to diſengage herſelf—"ſtop, you don't "know what you are about: if you cannot love "me Kitty, do not, in pity do not, feed a flame "which almoſt devours me."

I ſtill held her, gazing on her paſſionately; ſhe ſtruggled, but faintly, to get from me (more from a charming baſhfulneſs, I flattered myſelf, which made her eyes appear doubly alluring, than from an averſion to me) and, at the ſame time, ſaid, ſmiling, "Muſt I not praiſe you, "as you are ſo very worthy, and as you pleaſe "me ſo exceedingly?"

"My angel," replied I, mad with joy, "what are you about? Do you know, my "Kitty," (with a ſwelling ſigh which almoſt diſcovered the exceſs of my paſſion) "do you "know that every word which drops from thoſe "dear lips, and that every glance which is dart- "ed from thoſe expreſſive eyes, fill me with "the moſt tranſporting ſenſations, and encourage "me to hope that I ſhall, one day, inſpire your "gentle heart with a tenderneſs equal to my "own?"

"Ah! do not indulge ſuch deluſive hopes," anſwered ſhe, breaking from me, with a downcaſt look, "do not harbour a thought which can "give you a moment's pain. I eſteem you, as "I have often declared, more than I do any "other man, but I am not ſenſible of——" *(heſitating.)*

"I know too well what you would add," replied I, "and will be content with your "eſteem, my dear girl. Time, and my un-"wearied endeavours to touch the tendereſt and "moſt generous heart in the world, may per-"haps bring about the completion of my "wiſhes."

At this moment Davers entered the room, and Kitty left me in a ſtate of mind not to be deſcribed. I was abſolutely racked between hopes and fears, and felt that I ſhould ſoon be more than mentally diſordered. I was, in a ſhort time afterwards, ſeized with a ſhivering like an ague.

We met at dinner, but I could not eat. Davers took notice of my indiſpoſition: Mrs. Davers was alſo very obliging. Kitty, dear kind girl, caſt, every now and then, a compaſſionate look at me, which half cured me. When we withdrew into an other apartment, ſhe lingered behind, and aſked me how I found myſelf.

"A good deal out of order," ſaid I, preſſing her hand, "but I ſhall be able to attend you to-"morrow,

"morrow, to the maſked ball." [Lord Hythe had given tickets to the two ſiſters, and I ſubſcribed on purpoſe to be near Kitty.]

"I beg you would not think of going, "if you are not well," ſaid ſhe, "I am quite "indifferent about it: indeed I had rather ſtay "at home."

How prettily was that ſpoken! She knew that I ſhould be anxious at her being there without me. How charmingly conſiderate! I went home, however, early that evening, and by ſome ſalutary precautions was better the next day, the adventures of which muſt be reſerved for another letter.

LETTER XLIX.

From the Same to the Same.

KITTY dances like a goddeſs. She looked like Hebe, or Flora, or one of the Graces. She was indeed graceful beyond expreſſion. She was lovelineſs itſelf, and charmed more in the habit of a Wood-nymph by the ſimplicity of her whole exterior, than other women did with their beauty. She was *leaſt* adorned, and, therefore, according to your favourite poet *moſt* adorned: all females in the room but herſelf ſtrove to outſhine each other by the brilliancy of their appearance; *ſhe* was eminently diſtinguiſhed by the plainneſs of her dreſs which was deliciouſly fancied. She was in white turned up with ſea green: ſhe had nothing

on her head but a little light hat which ſhaded her fine hair, part of which was combed back, the reſt hung in ringlets on her ſnowy neck. Her ſleeves were tucked up ſhort with bunches of the ſame green colour, and diſcovered her round white arms to the greateſt advantage. Every body admired her figure; her every motion was attractive: when ſhe danced all eyes were upon her. I had the happineſs to be her partner, and to have her under my protection for the evening. On her firſt entrance into the room ſhe was ſo ſtruck with the blaze of the lights, the brilliancy of the decorations, and the variety of rich and elegantly fancied dreſſes around her, that ſhe whiſpered to me, "Surely "this is an enchanted place." Yet was ſhe ſoon tired of gazing at the motley crowd, ſoon weary of the numberleſs nothings which were, every moment, repeated: and long before the hour of breaking up did ſhe earneſtly wiſh to return home; but I could not leave her ſiſter to whom Lord Hythe cloſely attached himſelf, by order of her indiſcreet huſband, I may, indeed add, as well as from his own inclination; for I heard him, myſelf, ſay to him, "You will take care "of my wife, Hythe; ſhe was never at any "of theſe places before, and, conſequently, "muſt be a little at a loſs." How thoughtleſs! Yet no man has more ſenſe upon other occaſions. I have often obſerved, Hepburne, that men with the beſt underſtandings commit the moſt

moſt egregious blunders about their women. I could, I believe, at this time, name above a dozen young fellows who are, in general, extremely keen, but who, in their tranſactions with the fair ſex, prove themſelves to be mere ingnoramuſes. Some are jilted, ſome are married to downright flirts, and others are governed by the ſillieſt, the uglieſt creatures imaginable: the majority of them fooliſhly bring their wives and their miſtreſſes acquainted with fellows infinitely their ſuperiors in the arts of *charming*, and, by ſo doing, are frequently duped by them in a deplorable manner. But what is all this to the purpoſe? you will ſay. Pardon my digreſſion into which I was inſenſibly thrown by reflecting upon Davers's prodigious want of penetration. To return to the ball room.

Luckily no miſchief could happen, as they —— you know who I mean — were ſtrictly watched. A Domino, having eyed my little charge all the evening, and made her occaſionally many polite compliments, grew, at laſt, ſo ſweet upon her that I was obliged to interpoſe. I deſired my gentleman to deſiſt, but, as he did not chuſe to comply with my requeſt, I gave Kitty my hand in order to lead her out of the room. He then ſeized her other hand, and ſwore he would not part with her. I was then forced to tell him—and I told him in very plain terms—that nothing but my attention to the lady, who was under my care, and whom I would not

quit, prevented me from chaſtizing him for his inſolence in the way he deſerved.

He replied, "That excuſe, Sir, ſhall not "ſerve your turn; I have as much right to the "lady as yourſelf."

"I have a right, Sir," replied I, "to take "any lady under my protection when I ſee her "inſulted."

"Oh, then, I find you are neither huſband, "brother, nor accepted lover to this lady: I "ſhall, therefore, take the liberty to diſpute her "heart with you."

"My heart is my own, Sir," ſaid Kitty, with unuſual courage, "and ſhall never be "given to him who inſults either me or my "company. I inſiſt upon your leaving us im-"mediately: I am protected by this gentleman, "and ſhall intreat him, on no account to leave "me."

This ſpirited ſpeech ſeemed to be very well calculated to drive away our *impertinent*, but he anſwered, "I am as much charmed with your "humour now, Madam, as I was with your "figure before; and therefore neither your pre-"ſent protector, nor any other man, ſhall keep "you from me."

Seizing her hand when he had uttered thoſe words, looking at *me* with a very *cavalier* air, he attempted to put it to his lips. I then felt myſelf quite angry, and ſtepping up to Lord Hythe, who happened, at that inſtant, to be pretty

pretty near me, begged him to take care of Miſs Oſwald, while I corrected a troubleſome fellow for daring to offend her with unbecoming freedoms.

Hythe, tho' deeply engaged with his fair ſultana, Mrs. Davers, very politely offered his arm to Kitty; but ſhe, hurrying from him, caught hold of *mine*, and proteſted that I ſhould not leave her; adding, that ſhe would rather endure ſtill more diſagreeable ſpeeches from the impertinent ſtranger, than ſuffer me to be concerned in a quarrel on her account. "Look to it, Mr. "Shelburne," continued the charming creature, "I cannot boaſt of a great deal of bravery, but "if you go out with this gentleman (whoſe in-"ſolence has rendered him unworthy of the ap-"pellation) I will go alſo. To whatever danger "you are expoſed, *I* will ſhare it. Now Sir," concluded ſhe, fixing her eyes upon the man who had ſtirred up her generous reſentment, "We are ready to attend you."

"Admirable ſpirit! whiſpered he, who could "have expected to ſee ſuch a becoming fierce-"neſs in thoſe eyes, in defence of their admirer, "which ſeemed formed only to expreſs the ſoft-"eſt ſenſibility! Be compoſed, madam, I did "not know half your merit. I aſk pardon for "having undeſignedly, offended *you*, and this "gentleman your protector. You will now, I

" hope, permit me to be near you the reſt of the " evening."

She made no reply: he afterwards behaved to us with great reſpect, but we declined entering into converſation with him as much as poſſible, and got ſafe home.

On our return home, the dear creature repeatedly told me how glad ſhe was that I had not been more dangerouſly ſituated on her account.

The next day, as ſoon as I had quitted my chamber, my ſervant informed me that Lord G—— deſired the favour of ſpeaking with me.

Lord G—— was a ſtranger to me: however, I immediately came down to him, and in *him* found my troubleſome friend at the maſquerade.

He accoſted me with great politeneſs, " I wait " on you, Sir," ſaid he, " to beg you would tell " me if you are engaged to the young lady whom " you took care of laſt night."

I aſſured him that I was not ſo happy.

He then deſired to know if ſhe had any engagement of the tender kind.

" I really, my Lord, cannot give you the re- " queſted information, not having the honour to " be truſted with the lady's ſecrets."

" An honourable engagement, I preſume, Sir, " cannot be a ſecret; and tho' I am but very " ſlightly

"ſlightly acquainted with Miſs Oſwald, I dare "affirm that ſhe will never be concerned in any "other."

"I am quite of your opinion, my Lord."

He made his bow; and ſo ended our converſation.

LETTER L.

From the Same to the Same.

SHALL I confeſs that I am ſo poor a philoſopher as to have been made uneaſy by *that* fellow—I beg his pardon—by Lord G——? but I cannot hear of any body's thinking ſeriouſly of Kitty without being alarmed. How weak, indeed how fooliſh, am I, for thus diſquieting myſelf, for I muſt, neceſſarily ſuppoſe, that ſhe will marry, ay, and a man whom ſhe loves too. I abſolutely begin to hate myſelf for being ſo ridiculous as to imagine that ſhe will marry nobody, becauſe ſhe does not feel tender ſenſations in *my* favour. However, you have had enough of my folly.

As ſoon as I had reaſon to believe that Kitty was up, I hurried to Davers's, and, upon entering the parlour, found Lord G—— dreſt in the extreme of coxcombry, and ſurveying his own pretty figure in the glaſs. At my appearance, he turned about with a ſort of a ſurprize. Having been wearied, the evening before, with his non-

ſenſe, and not a little touched with jealouſy, I was exceedingly out of humour, and ſunk into the firſt chair I met with, when our compliments were exchanged.

We ſat not long before the ſweet cauſe of our viſit came in. She paſſed Lord G—— totally regardleſs of him, and flew to *me*. "I hurried, "Mr. Shelburne, to thank you for your care of "me laſt night." Perceiving Lord G——, ſhe ſtarted a little, appeared to recollect herſelf, and ſtopped as if ſhe expected him to ſpeak. On his continuing ſilent ſhe looked at me as if ſhe was impatient to have him gone. *He* was, no doubt, equally deſirous of *my* removal, but I did not in the leaſt intend to leave the field to *him*.

For ſome moments we, all three, ſat ſtaring at each other.

Lord G——, finding that there were no hopes of *my* departure, made up to the Lady, and in a very free, fulſome manner, offered himſelf to her as an honourable lover.

She bluſhed, but the colour glowing in her cheeks did not ariſe from that ſweet baſhfulneſs which ever accompanies the firſt attentions to an approved lover; it was rather occaſioned by the reſentment which ſhe felt on being addreſſed in ſo abrupt a manner, and before a third perſon too. She therefore preſently diſmiſſed him with a poſitive refuſal.

The

The man of Gallantry, however, was by no means, willing to take her at her word. He renewed his addreſſes, and renewed them with vehemence.

She again aſſured him in a ſtill more peremptory tone, that ſhe ſhould not, on any account, alter her opinion.

He, then, unable to maintain his poſt with a tolerable grace, took his leave; but he quitted the room with the ſtrongeſt marks of diſſatisfaction in his face.

When he was gone, Kitty confeſſed that ſhe had ſuffered exceedingly, from her fears for my ſake. You may be ſure I thanked her for that confeſſion, and alſo for declaring a diſlike to Maſquerades. "Some few of the women," added ſhe, "whom I ſaw laſt night, became "their fancy-dreſſes, but the majority of them "were, I think, horridly diſguiſed: they want-"ed *no* maſks: and the handſomeſt women in "the room would have looked better, in my opi-"nion, in common dreſſes."

Miſs Oſwald is, indeed, particularly elegant in her appearance. She has, I imagine, but a ſmall ſum allowed by her father for her wardrobe, &c. &c. yet ſhe always contrives to make a genteel figure, and is very happy in the choice of her cloaths, which are extremely becoming. There are many ornaments which, under her direction,

direction, would rather heighten than diminiſh her natural lovelineſs; ornaments which ſhe may, whenever ſhe pleaſes, enjoy with Sir William Morley, or Lord G——; but ſhe nobly diſdains to ſacrifice her perſon to finery, and judiciouſly prefers ſimplicity in her apparel with the free diſpoſal of her heart. As ſhe has rejected too ſuch conſiderable offers, ſhe will hardly diſpoſe of her hand with mercenary views. The queſtion is whether ſhe will always remain attached to Lord Hythe, or whether another man, when ſhe finds *him* irrecoverably loſt to her, may not charm her ſtill more than *he* has done. However, I have no hopes of being that happy fellow; for though I think I may venture to ſay that her friendſhip rather increaſes, every day, there is not a ſpark of love in her dear boſom to kindle encouragement in the breaſt of,

Your deſparing friend.

C. S.

P. S. Mrs. Davers was very brilliant at our *Bal Paré* and greatly admired. To the pleaſure which ſhe received on being ſo much admired I could not help imputing her inattention to Hythe's humble civilities during the evening. When a woman is once thoroughly delighted with general admiration ſhe has not leiſure to be touched by any one man's tender officiouſneſs about her.

LET-

LETTER LI.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

IN a few days, my Nancy, we ſhall ſet out for Beechwood. To my great ſatisfaction would my departure from London be, were not Lord Hythe invited to go with us.—What is Mr. Davers about? Can he not catch a ſingle glimpſe of what appears too, too plain to me? And I fear that other people will ſoon make diſcoveries ſimilar to mine. I *muſt* ſpeak to my ſiſter: I can bear her anger, I can bear the charge of jealouſy, but to ſee her expoſe herſelf——no—I *muſt* ſpeak to her. Yet how can I acquaint her with what I wiſh to communicate? Would it were any body's taſk but your Kitty's! My father and mother are the propereſt perſons, but I ſhall not, I think, act prudently by creating ſuſpicions in *them*, diſtant as they are from us. Next to them my brother is the fitteſt intelligencer upon this delicate occaſion. Charles I ſeldom ſee: he neither knows what we are doing, nor ſeems to trouble his head about us; and indeed if he has not found out his poor Lucy's indiſcretion, I don't know whether I ought to inform even *him* of it. We cannot too ſtudiouſly conceal our failings. And were it ever ſo proper to impart my fears to Charles, can a ſiſter behave affectionately by expoſing a ſiſter's frailty? No, Nancy, I ſhall never bring myſelf to expoſe her, I love her too ſincerely.

Mr.

Mr. Shelburne ſaw very ſoon what I ſo much wiſh to bury in oblivion: we both indeed made our diſcoveries almoſt at the ſame time, and we, both, inſenſibly imparted them to each other. Where is there a man ſo conſiderate, ſo ſenſible, ſo good, as Mr. Shelburne? He treats every one of our family with as great a regard as if we were all related to him.

As I depend upon your keeping your word, and coming to Beechwood, I ſhall defer giving you an account of the maſked ball we were at t'other night. Things of infinitely more importance fill my mind at preſent; half diſtract it indeed. Come then, my deareſt friend, and adminiſter all the conſolation in your power, to your

Ever ſincere,
But, at this moment,
Extremely diſquieted,
C. OSWALD.

LETTER LII.

From the Same to the Same.

Beechwood.

YOU cannot imagine how you have diſappointed me by not performing your promiſe; your apology, however, for the breach of it is very ſatisfactory. A *father* is certainly not to be diſobeyed for the ſake of a *friend*; yet were I at Mr. Allenſon's elbow, at this inſtant, I would

I would plead hard to have your company for one little month.

Fully determined to do what I ſaid I would in my laſt, I have watched for a favourable opportunity to ſpeak to my ſiſter; but I have not yet been able to carry my deſign into execution. Lord Hythe and ſhe are perpetually together, yet my brother Davers ſeems to ſee nothing to diſturb him in their behaviour to each other. Mr. Davers has, I am afraid, a violent deſire to ſeduce the girl who waits on little Lucy. Were I to ſpeak to my ſiſter *now*, therefore, ſhe would only anſwer me by accuſing her huſband of freſh gallantries. But this is mere conjecture—I wiſh I may be miſtaken.

Charles has been diſcovered in the neighbourhood: conſequently, he has been obliged to make his appearance at the *Wood*. Perhaps I may be lucky enough to ſeize a moment to ſpeak to him uninterrupted. You don't know how you have vexed me by not coming to this place at this juncture. I am ſenſible I diſcover too much ſelfiſhneſs, by wiſhing to have you with me, as I can only talk to you about my diſtreſſes; but ſurely 'tis very natural for us, when we are diſtreſſed, to wiſh for the conſoling converſation of a ſincere friend.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

I Have had the ſatisfaction to be invited to Beechwood, as well as Lord Hythe, and ſhall, once more, be in the houſe with my dear Kitty. This invitation has given me a pleaſure which I cannot conceal. I have expreſſed it to her in terms which made her ſmile, while I was quite overwhelmed with ſenſations not to be deſcribed: could I have diſguiſed thoſe ſenſations I might have been, perhaps, more agreeable in her eyes; however, I am happy in being looked upon as her friend: and ſhe plainly *ſo* looks upon me by unfolding her heart and by making me acquainted with its moſt diſquieting anxieties. Deeply is ſhe now afflicted both upon her ſiſter's and upon Davers's account: ſhe fears that *he* is in ſearch of a new miſtreſs; by ſuch a proceeding he will certainly make things a great deal worſe.

Charles Oſwald is here, and as much attached to Lady Juliet as ever, who has the art to keep him ſtill in ſuſpenſe by amuſing him with fine tales, and buoying him up with deluſive hopes. In ſhort his head is abſolutely turned. What dangerous creatures are theſe voluptuous women of faſhion to your eaſy, amorous, good-natured young fellows!—'Tis pity, tho', they ſhould be ſuffered to bewitch them in this manner, and draw their attention from women of another caſt. What an unexceptionable huſband would this young

young Oſwald make! He has all the perſonal beauty by which his ſiſters are diſtinguiſhed, all *their* accompliſhments and virtues. How does he loſe himſelf in the purſuit of *this* woman who will, moſt probably, corrupt his morals and vitiate his taſte!—I am very ſenſible that the generality of men, ay, and of women too, will ſneer at me for mentioning the morals of a fine young fellow; but I ſhould be glad to know whether any man or any woman was ever undeſirable meerly for being untainted with the vices of the age. Could I prevail on Charles to quit Lady Juliet, and to attach himſelf to a more amiable character, I ſhould feel great pleaſure, becauſe I really think he would make a ſhining figure in domeſtic life: for *that* life the two ſiſter's are happily formed by nature. Had Davers never neglected his wife no other man would ever have engaged her attention; and if the lovely Kitty could fix the affections of Lord Hythe no turtle would be more conſtant: they are both unhappy from having beſtowed their tenderneſs upon wrong objects. Mrs. Davers is indeed in the more pitiable ſituation becauſe ſhe is united to a man who ſets not a ſufficient value upon the treaſure in his poſſeſſion; yet ſhe is highly cenſurable for behaving in a manner very ill-calculated to cure him of his wandering diſpoſition, and to render him faithful to her. Davers's conduct cannot, it muſt be owned, be defended, and his amiable wife has been unjuſtly as well as unkindly treated:

and

and ſhould ſhe be ſtill farther provoked by the infidelities of her huſband, ſhe will, I fear, think, by a fallacious, but not uncommon way of reaſoning, that ſhe may fairly give Lord Hythe all the encouragement he wiſhes for. Did ſhe only conſider how much ſooner a woman's character is blaſted than a man's, did ſhe conſider how much honour ſhe would acquire by reclaiming the libertine with whom ſhe is indiſſolubly connected, how different would be her deportment! With *her* beauties, and with her accompliſhments ſhe has conſiderable advantages, but I am afraid that, for want of patience and ſubmiſſion, and a few other domeſtic virtues, in the practice of which a *wife* ſhines in her full luſtre, ſhe will increaſe the number of her indiſcretions, and plunge herſelf at laſt into a condition——I pity her from my heart while I condemn her.

Poor Kitty! I pity *her* too extremely.—Bleſſed with all the good qualities, and adorned with all the graces which can render a woman amiable and alluring at the ſame time, ſhe is loſt to herſelf, and to her friends, by having too early fixed her inclinations on a man who has eyes only for her ſiſter. I never look on this lovely girl, without thinking, while I doatingly admire her, how infinitely more beauteous ſhe would be were ſhe beloved by the man of her choice, or could ſhe feel partialities for him who languiſhes for the poſſeſſion of her heart. How much more would her countenance be animated, what a

new

new ſpirit would be ſeen in all her features, what an additional tenderneſs would be expreſſed in her eyes, and how many more bewitching ſmiles would play about her elegant little mouth, were ſhe as fondly followed by Lord Hythe as her ſiſter is!—But Hythe has no ſentiments worthy of her, and ſhe will never, I doubt, feel thoſe which are ſo ardently longed for by,

Your almoſt deſpairing
Friend,
C. S.

LETTER LIV.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

I Muſt now give up all pretenſions to Lord Hythe. There is come down upon a viſit to her aunt, Lady Foſter in this neighbourhood, one of the ſweeteſt, but wildeſt girls you ever ſaw; a Miſs Ruſſell. She is not above ſixteen; ſhe has the fineſt complexion, and the livelieſt eyes to be conceived. Every man ſeems to be ſtruck with her but Mr. Shelburne: why, will he never look with regard on any woman except her, who cannot poſſibly make him as happy as he deſerves to be?—I wiſh again and again that you were here; you would be charmed with this Fanny Ruſſell. I am pleaſed with her beyond expreſſion; for many reaſons: I hope that my ſiſter will be upon her guard before this young ſtranger. My brother Davers will, I fancy, be drawn

drawn by her bright eyes, and briſk repartees, from the attendant on his little daughter whom he has already diſtinguiſhed very improperly. Fanny appears as innocent as ſhe is attractive, and I will venture to anſwer for her diſcretion. She will make a diverſion amongſt us, and ſet us all to rights I hope.

I am prevented from going on. I muſt, therefore, come abruptly to a concluſion: but you may depend upon hearing ſoon again from,

Your's, ever-ſincerely,

C. O.

LETTER LV.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

YOU are aſtoniſhed, you ſay, at not hearing from me: we have had a little buſtle in the family which has prevented me from writing. We were all in a large party, to go upon the water in a pleaſure-boat of Davers's. Lord Hythe, endeavouring to accommodate Mrs. Davers with a ſeat that ſhe might ſee a rich proſpect in a particular point of view, fell over the ſide of the veſſel. Both the ſiſter's ſcreamed. I ſaw, I felt, Kitty's diſtreſs, and plunged in. By the ſtrength of my arm I ſaved her favourite; but when ſhe beheld him lifted into the boat, with hardly any ſigns of life, ſhe claſped her hands in an agony and fainted.

Words

Words cannot deſcribe *my* agitation. Regardleſs of Hythe, regardleſs of my own dropping condition, regardleſs of every thing, attentive only to the dear diſtreſſed girl, I flew to her, caught her in my arms, raiſed her languid head on my boſom, the coldneſs of which from its expoſure to the water, reſtored her ſenſes, I believe. Opening her eyes, but with ſome difficulty, ſhe cried, in a faint voice, "Are you not "hurt Mr. Shelburne?"

I underſtood her. She wiſhed, by that queſtion addreſſed to *me*, to know if Hythe was ſafe. "My Lord, is recovering apace," ſaid I, in a half-whiſper.

Joy, inſtantly, enlivened her pallid cheeks, ſhe feebly preſſed the hand which held hers, and ſaid, "Are *you* ſafe, have *you* received no harm?"

"None—none at all," anſwered I, tho' I felt a ſhivering through my whole frame.

Several of our friends then crowded round us, and inſiſted upon my going aſhore, and on being put immediately into a warm bed. The ſame preſcription was alſo ſtrongly recommended to Hythe, as his life might be endangered by his remaining in his thorough wet cloaths.

Mrs. Davers was officious about his lordſhip, but decently ſo. Inſenſibility, upon ſuch an occaſion, would have been, indeed, unpardonable.

Kitty hung her head, and ſeemed to be fearful of meeting my eyes; yet ſhe now and then aſk-

ed

ed me how I found myſelf; aſked me if I was not ill.

I told her I was very well, tho' I felt myſelf all over indiſpoſed, more, I believe, from ſeeing her partiality to Hythe ſo plainly confirmed, than from the chillneſs ariſing from my damp cloaths. We landed, at laſt, and I could no longer ſtand upon ceremony. I haſtened to my apartment, and to bed. Hythe, I heard, followed *my* example.

I was all night, in a burning fever: when enquiries were ſent after me in the morning, I was informed that Hythe was well, tho' the phyſician who had been ſummoned by Davers to attend us both, had ordered him to keep his bed the greateſt part of the day. According to my intelligence ſince, Mrs. Davers gave him her company.

As to myſelf the doctor found me in a high fever, and preſcribed proper medicines to remove it, but I became ſo much out of order before night, that I really began to entertain doubts with regard to my recovery.

Soon after Davers had left me I thought I heard ſomebody ſigh heavily.

Putting back the curtain with my hand I ſaw Kitty, the dear Kitty ſitting with her handkerchief up to her eyes, in a chair by my bed-ſide.

I ſtarted with ſuch a ſpring at ſo unexpected a ſight, that I almoſt threw myſelf out of bed, crying, at the ſame time, "Miſs Oſwald!—

"For

"For heaven's ſake don't grieve thus—they aſ-
"ſure me that Lord Hythe will recover."

"He *is* recovered, he is *well*," replied the weeping girl.

"Why then do I ſee thoſe tears?" anſwered I, laying my hand on hers.

"Can you aſk, when you are ſo ill yourſelf;
"can you ſuppoſe that I have no eſteem for
"you?"

"Is it poſſible then, Kitty, that you can be ſo
"tenderly afflicted on *my* account?"

"Don't talk of that," replied ſhe, "I am af-
"flicted for you not as a lover, but as a friend.
"I grieve for you as the moſt valuable man I
"know; let me, therefore, intreat you, moſt
"earneſtly, to take all the care you can of your-
"ſelf; and to neglect nothing which may for-
"ward your recovery."

"Cruel Kitty," ſaid I, "you tell me you
"eſteem me one moment, and you add you do
"not love me the next, and give me reaſon to
"fear that you never will feel any paſſion *but*
"eſteem for me."

"Say rather—to ſpeak juſtly—that I *cannot*
"feel any other paſſion for you. If you knew
"what I have ſuffered for your ſake you would
"not talk in ſo ſevere a ſtrain."

"My deareſt Kitty," replied I, preſſing her hand to my boſom, "I am truly ſorry if I have
"been the cauſe of the ſlighteſt uneaſineſs to
"you. But have you really felt any anxiety

"con-

"concerning *me?* Tell me, for the confeſſion "of it may greatly contribute to the reſtoration "of my health."

The entrance of Davers prevented a verbal reply, but a look which ſhe directed to me diſcovered that ſhe ſincerely lamented my illneſs, and made ſome amends for the apprehenſions which ſhe could not conceal about Lord Hythe.

Davers took his ſeat by me, and appeared, I thought, very much diſcompoſed; diſcontented.

I aſked him, among other queſtions, how Mrs. Davers did: "I hope ſhe has recovered "from her fright."

"Has ſhe not been to ſee you?" ſaid he, haſtily.

"No, I have not yet been honoured with a "viſit from her."

"Umph!—She is mighty partial to Hythe "then, for ſhe is almoſt always in his room."

Here, I thought, a little of the jealous huſband peeped out; however, not being willing to encourage his ſuſpicions, I replied, "He was in "more danger than I was, and conſequently "ſtands in need of more care.

"Yes—but you are in a much worſe way "now, and certainly there are people enough in "my family to take care of him; I don't ſee "why he ſhould make a nurſe of my wife. I "begin to believe, indeed, that ſhe attaches "herſelf to him, to try if ſhe can make me "jealous,

"jealous, in return for my little affair with Sally "Pigot, for ſhe has never behaved to me ſince "with her former tenderneſs, and I dare ſay ſhe "and Hythe give themſelves no ſort of trouble "about each other but with that view."

"You ſee then," ſaid I ſmiling, "the ne-"ceſſity of being conſtant, as your rambling is "ſo particularly diſagreeable to Mrs. Davers; "and, in truth, my friend, any woman would "be diſguſted at ſo great a change in the man "whom ſhe had looked upon as the tendereſt of "huſbands."

"There is no woman," anſwered he, in a pettiſh tone, "in Lucy's ſituation, who would "behave ſo fooliſhly as ſhe does. Why now I "ſuppoſe ſhe will be exceedingly offended at my "romping with Fanny Ruſſel, the prettieſt "little creature in the univerſe — I wiſh I had "known her before I was acquainted with Lucy, "ſhe ſhould have been my wife."

"Fye, Davers," ſaid I, "how ſtrangely you "talk! Could any man in the world be more "enraptured with a woman than you was with "Mrs. Davers on your marriage, and for ſome "time afterwards? She was the lovelieſt, ten-"dereſt creature—I can produce letters—Hep-"burne too can produce letters — in which you "deſcribe her as little inferior to an angel—but I "am afraid, Ned, you are of a very fickle diſpo-"ſition."

"Indeed I am not of ſuch a diſpoſition," replied he gravely: "no man could love a woman "more ſincerely than I loved Lucy, and I had "the higheſt eſteem for her—even at the very "time I kept Sally—I was, perhaps, wrong by "having any connections with *her*: I never "juſtified my behaviour to her to you—but you "know I told you I was drawn into that affair; "and when I had made the poor girl unhappy, "it was ſurely incumbent on me to do all in my "power to render the ſituation into which I had "brought her not abſolutely inſupportable:— "and let me tell you, Charles, if my wife had "been as patient, as gentle, as tender as Sally; "if ſhe had received me, after the diſcovery of "my inconſtancy, in her uſual affectionate man- "ner I never ſhould have left her again. Were "the married women in general, more indulgent "to their huſbands, and leſs inclined to gallantry "themſelves, they would be much happier than "they are. Cuſtom allows *us* to take ſome li- "berties from which we ought, perhaps, to "refrain; yet nature, all-powerful nature, will "ſometimes ſtimulate us to go imprudent, if not "unwarrantable lengths: but when a man en- "deavours to make atonement for his incon- "tinence (which, however blameable cannot, "with any propriety, be deemed ſo reprehenſible "as the unfaithfulneſs of a woman who has vow- "ed fidelity to him) his wife has nothing to do "but to forgive and to forget, and to make her-

"ſelf

"ſelf happy with the returning affection of her "huſband: ſhe certainly cannot be commended "for driving him from her by her coolneſs: for "injuring both him and herſelf by giving encou- "ragement to others. Hythe is too much my "friend to attempt to ſeduce my wife, nor do I "believe ſhe has any criminal intentions in her "carriage to him, ſhe only, I imagine, wants to "vex me a little for my neglect of her; but ſhe "may go too far, defeat her deſigns, and have "reaſon to repent of her *fineſſing* with me."

I endeavoured to perſuade him that he had not put a right conſtruction upon Mrs. Davers's behaviour to Lord Hythe. "When ſhe ſees," added I, "that *you* have no favourite, but *her*, "ſhe will ſoon ceaſe to take particular notice of "his lordſhip."

I was, really, too ill to talk any more juſt then, upon that or any other ſubject, and he, perceiving me not in a condition to go on, very conſiderately left me, deſiring me to try to get ſome reſt.

In a few moments after his departure Kitty returned. To her I longed to relate all that I had heard, hoping that if it was properly communicated to Mrs. Davers it might have the wiſhed-for effect upon her: the dear girl, however, ſeeing me in pain from the manner in which I held my head, inſiſted upon my keeping myſelf quiet, and took up a book to read me to ſleep. Her intention was kind, but how could I

ſhut my ears againſt her melodious voice, with which ſhe emphatically expreſſed the ſenſe of of the author?

While ſhe was ſo ſweetly employed the pain in my head increaſed, and in a ſhort time raged with ſuch violence that I could not help ſaying, tho' I doated on her to diſtraction for her generous efforts to amuſe me, "Hold my dear Kitty, "I can never indeed thank you ſufficiently for "this charming proof of your regard for me, but "both my head and heart are, juſt now, too "much affected."

She ſmiled, looking full of complacency, full of compaſſion; and then roſe to leave me. "I "will come again by and by," ſaid ſhe.

"Can I ſend you from me?" replied I, "and "yet—"

"Make no excuſes—you want more aſſiſtance "than it is in *my* power to give you. Try to "compoſe yourſelf, I will return when you have "had ſome reſt."

At length, after a great many fruitleſs endeavours, I fell aſleep.—When I waked I found my guardian-angel ſitting by my ſide. As ſoon as I had poured out my grateful acknowledgments to her for her tender care, I acquainted her with every thing that had paſſed between Davers and me, adding, that I thought it would be moſt prudent to inform Mrs. Davers of it in the way beſt calculated to make an impreſſion upon her.

She

She ſighed, and ſhook her head. "'Tis a "nice point," ſaid ſhe, "a very nice point; and "I am afraid that my poor ſiſter is at preſent "little inclined to liſten to the converſation you "have repeated. She has been but too much "affected by Lord Hythe's accident, and *he* has "diſcovered ſuch joy at her aſſiduities about him, "her fears, her ſolicitudes concerning his reco-"very, that his inclination for her is undoubted-"ly increaſed. I tremble, therefore, only to "think of the fatal conſequences with which "this imprudent intimacy may be attended. "However, I will mention what you have re-"lated to her with all the addreſs I am miſtreſs "of."

She then left me to take care of myſelf. Being better this morning when I roſe, I determined to write to you.

LETTER LVI.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

I Have been in ſuch terrors, my dear Nancy, and have had ſo many reaſons for being unhappy ſince I wrote laſt, that I ſhould write a volume inſtead of a letter were I to tell you every thing that has happened. Lord Hythe has been almoſt drowned—you don't know how cruelly I was frighted to ſee him in imminent danger. Mr. Shelburne ſaved his life at the hazard of his own. He has had a very bad fever: he is a little

better, yet I think his diſorder has altered his fine face; he looks pale, and thin; yet I have been happy in giving him ſome ſatisfaction by the concern which I could not help ſhewing for his illneſs. How well did he deſerve this from me who am ſo much obliged to him for his kindneſs to my friends, and for the pains which he has taken to make them happy! I can never make returns adequate to the obligations I am under to him. But I am chiefly afflicted on my ſiſter's account: ſhe is quite deaf to every thing I can ſay to her to induce her to behave to Mr. Davers in a more affectionate manner. I went as far in a late converſation with her, as I dared, and intended to have thrown out ſome hints relating to Lord Hythe, but ſhe looked ſo haughtily and ſpoke ſo fretfully, that I was afraid, being conſcious alſo of having diſcovered no ſmall anxiety with regard to Lord Hythe, to diſcloſe my thoughts about her behaviour to him.

Fortunately for me ſhe herſelf gave me an opportunity to diſcloſe my thoughts on that behaviour, by ſaying, that while men took ſuch monſtrous liberties, their wives, in her opinion, merited no cenſure, if they liſtened to more agreeable men.

Here I ventured to oppoſe her. "Can any "man be more *agreeable* than Mr. Davers, my "my dear?"

"I am actually, ſurprized Kitty," replied ſhe, "at your aſking ſo very odd a queſtion. Is not "Lord

"Lord Hythe in *your* eyes, the moſt amiable of "men?"

I coloured like ſcarlet; yet, as I was determined to avail myſelf of the queſtion which had occaſioned my confuſion, I ſaid, with a ſmile, tho' far from being in a ſmiling humour, "You "will allow me, ſiſter, to have my fancies as "well as other people, and as I am quite *free* "and *diſengaged*, why may I not prefer Lord "Hythe to any other man?"

She bluſhed—I was glad to ſee the blood mounting in her cheeks; yet, poor thing, ſhe appeared to be ſo embarraſſed that I was almoſt ſorry I had gone ſo far. She turned pale, ſighed, ſat down, roſe up, opened her mouth to ſpeak, and ſhut it again—at laſt, covering her face with her hand, while her boſom heaved as if it would burſt her ſtays, ſhe ſaid in a feeble voice, "Has "Lord Hythe made you any offer?"

"Made *me* any offer?" replied I, haſtening to relieve her; "no, my dear, but you were "rallying me about him, and ſo I thought I "might have my laugh as well as you, eſpecially "as neither of us can be in the leaſt intereſted "concerning him. I ſit quite eaſy about him, "becauſe he has never troubled me with his *at-* "*tentions*, and you are ſurely ſtill more ſo, my "dear ſiſter, as you are married: not only all "your time, but all your looks and words ſhould "be addreſſed to Mr. Davers."

"How, Kitty?" replied ſhe, ſomewhat warmly, "do you then ſuppoſe that I am to ſa-"crifice all my time to Mr. Davers, a man ſo "careleſs, ſo indifferent, ſo inconſtant?"

"Indeed, ſiſter," ſaid I, "when once a wo-"man is married ſhe had better keep upon good "terms with her huſband whatever he may do to "weaken her attachment to him, than openly "reſent his unkind or injurious behaviour to her. "The leaſt ficklenes on her ſide will be unpar-"donable, and by attempting to make—by even "*appearing* deſirous of making repriſals, ſhe "will diſcover a diſpoſition by no means to be "defended. Such a woman will be always "looked upon in a contemptible light by people "of reputation: ſuch a woman, indeed, deſerves "the cold reception which ſhe generally meets "with from the virtuous part of her own ſex."

"You are monſtrous ſevere, Kitty," replied ſhe, glowing with ſhame and anger: "but take "care that *you* do not deſerve to have your ſati-"rical expreſſions retorted." — Then, haſtily riſing, ſhe quitted the room without turning her head; hoping, I ſuppoſe, by averting it from me, to conceal her confuſion. Poor, dear crea-ture! how I pity her!—I am glad, however, that ſhe took my hint; I may be encouraged to ſpeak more freely to her hereafter. Pray hea-ven that I may not be obliged to renew the re-primanding ſtrain!

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER LVII.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

KITTY, my generous, friendly Kitty, has reſtored me by her kind attendance, by her tender care, to health, and now keeps her former diſtance.

I aſked her, yeſterday, if ſhe had ſaved my life in order to reſerve me for a more cruel death.

In reply, ſhe began to talk to me of a Fanny Ruſſel, who has lately viſited at this place, and whom ſhe has reſolved to make me admire whether I will or no. The girl, is handſome, lively, ſenſible, and good-natured; but Kitty, Kitty alone is miſtreſs of my heart. She has, indeed, been acting the ſame part with me as I played with Hythe. She told me that Miſs Ruſſel was in love with me.

I coolly replied, "I can't help it, but pray "take notice that *my* vanity has not raiſed this "report ſo ſcandalizing to Miſs Ruſſel."—I am rejoiced whenever Kitty can ſtrike out any amuſement that may hinder her from dwelling too intenſely on the diſagreeable ſituation of her family.

Mrs. Davers and Lord Hythe grow more and more particular: they are, perpetually, together, and as much by themſelves as poſſible. They ſeem to be very much diſpleaſed when a third perſon comes in their way.

Davers aſcribes this behaviour of his wife entirely to her deſire to make him more aſſiduous about her; and, therefore, becauſe he will not be *outdone*, appears to be very ſweet upon Miſs Ruſſel. When he is driven from her with diſdain—for her carriage is very diſcreet—he flies to Biddy, his little daughter's maid, who will, I imagine, without much difficulty become a ſecond Sally Pigot.— This is our party at home. Charles Oſwald is generally *cooing* in a *tête-a-tête* with lady Juliet at *her* houſe.

I have made another effort to draw Charles from his *charmer*, but in vain. He ſpeaks more highly of her than ever: he ſwears that ſhe is as virtuous as ſhe is handſome, and that ſhe richly deſerves all his eſteem. I wiſh he may have no reaſon to alter his opinion about her. "Since "ſhe is ſo much attached to *you*," ſaid I to him, the other day, "and ſince ſhe is worthy of your "eſteem, why does ſhe not marry you?"

"Why, to tell you the truth," replied he, "I am continually endeavouring to bring matters "to a concluſion, but her only reply is, ſhe "hates marriage."

"Leave her, then, Charles," anſwered I, "and turn your thoughts on Miſs Ruſſel. She "is young, handſome, and good-humoured, and "ſhe will have fifteen thouſand pounds."

"That will never do," cried he.

Charles has taken it into his head, following Kitty's example, that Miſs Ruſſel is in love with *me*.

me. He boldly aſſerts that I am her favourite: he goes farther—but I am not credulous enough to believe him.

Thus you ſee we none of us accord properly: I wiſh ſomething would happen to ſet us all to rights: but I believe we ſhall be all in a wrong way for ſome time, as we ſeem to be very little under the directions of reaſon. Rational lovers, indeed may not be improperly called "*raræ aves.*"

LETTER LVIII.

From the Same to the Same.

I Am become, according to the country phraſe, an Eaves-dropper. I have not yet, 'tis true, as a *liſtener*, heard no good of myſelf, but I have heard a great many things which were not very welcome to my ears.

After a remarkably-hot-day, I ſauntered ſlowly down, in the cool of the evening, to a ſhady walk, which led to a beautiful grotto full of ſeats, but ſo contrived, as not to be all of them diſcovered at the ſame time.—Throwing myſelf upon one of them in the obſcureſt part of it, I amuſed myſelf by liſtening to the water dropping among the pebbles.

Hearing a litle buſtle at the entrance I turned about, and perceived Lord Hythe and Mrs. Davers. His lordſhip's arm encircled her waiſt: to do her juſtice, however, ſhe endeavoured to remove his arm, ſaying, while ſhe was employed,

ed, but with accents, and in a manner more calculated to *attract* a lover than to *repel* him, "Let "me go my Lord; 'tis too late to ſit down "now."

"Not at all," replied he, "what can be more "inviting than the delicious *freſco* of the evening "air? You have complained all day of the ſuf-"focating ſultrineſs of the weather; here you "will feel extremely pleaſant ſenſations: let me "perſuade you—"

He then with an inſinuating look, which gained his point, immediately led her to a ſeat of which I had, concealed from *them* a full view.

The converſation was meltingly tender on *his* part, and rather encouraging on *hers*. The *Peer* was profuſe of his dangerous compliments. The lady, after having uttered ſeveral prohibitions, which amounted to invitations, roſe, to go, but, evidently with reluctance. Hythe preſſed her to allow him another half-quarter of an hour, taking at the ſame time all the little amorous freedoms which are not abſolutely indecent—for thoſe freedoms ſhe now and then reproved him; now and then ſhe *endured* them with an affected diſſatisfaction, which ſharpened the edge of her admirer's appetite. On her looking at her watch, he covered it with his hand, telling her that ſhe would ſpoil her eyes, as he was ſure that ſhe could not diſtinguiſh the *chryſtal* from the *caſe*. "It is certainly very late, then," replied ſhe. As ſoon as theſe words were articulated they went out of the grotto, in the manner they entered it.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

MISS Ruſſel is, without diſpute, quite in love with Shelburne. I am aſtoniſhed that the ſweet innocent way in which ſhe, inadvertently, diſcovered her ſtrong prepoſſeſſion for him, does not affect him.

While I was walking down the graſs-walk, at the bottom of the ſhrubbery, yeſterday morning, I heard Fanny's voice uncommonly loud. Turning my head I ſaw her ſtruggling violently to get from Davers, who held her cloſe in ſpite of her ſtout reſiſtance. On Mr. Shelburne's appearance oppoſite to them, ſhe, with a ſudden ſpring, broke from Davers, crying at the ſame time, "Save me, Mr. Shelburne," and ran into his arms which were opened ready to receive her. In thoſe arms ſhe inſtantly fainted—Davers moved off. Shelburne, looking extremely diſconcerted, and alarmed called, with vehemence, "Miſs Oſwald, Miſs Oſwald, pray aſſiſt me." She looked, I thought, very pale, and ſeemed to be very much agitated: I, therefore, ran to hold ſome ſalts to her noſe: by adminiſtering *them*, I ſoon brought her to her ſenſes. Shelburne, during *my* applications, ſupported her.—As ſoon as ſhe recovered ſhe made a great many apologies to him for the trouble ſhe had given him, in a faultering voice, and with a modeſt glow in her countenance. He would have been, I imagined,

quite

quite conquered by her alluring behaviour, but he only beheld her charming confuſion with the emotions naturally ariſing from humanity. His whole carriage, indeed, to Miſs Ruſſel gave no ſmall pleaſure to me; it gave exquiſite delight, I ſaw plainly, to *her*. To ſay truth, Nancy, I never was ſo much pleaſed with Mr. Shelburne before. Actually, I am not ſure whether I do not love him—I am aware that I ſhall appear to you in a light whimſical enough, by taking a ſudden fancy to a man who has long been uneaſy on *my* account, meerly from his behaviour to another woman—yet, ſo it is. He received her in his arms in the moſt delicate manner imaginable, and evidently kept his tenderneſs under, leſt he ſhould, while he diſcovered the benevolence with which his excellent heart was filled, either increaſe her confuſion—or, her inclination for him. He certainly perceives that ſhe is in love with him, tho' his modeſty, and the want of a deſire to return her paſſion, will not permit him to appear conſcious of his perception of it.—How amiable is ſuch a deportment in a man, and how very few men are there who do not ſeek to take advantage of the weakneſſes of our ſex; who do not even glory in diſtreſſing *us* without receiving any real pleaſure from their ungenerous —not to ſay—cruel proceedings!

Poor Fanny!—As ſoon as Shelburne left us—he left us very ſoon after her recovery—ſhe almoſt betrayed herſelf by the concern which ſhe expreſſed at this little incident; declaring, at the

ſame

ſame time, that Mr. Davers had expoſed her to it, by taking liberties with her which were highly unbecoming in a married man.

I affected to take no notice of her partiality for Mr. Shelburne (to dwell upon the praiſes of an object which is but too agreeable to us does more harm than good) and turned the converſation. Miſs Ruſſel took her leave in a few moments, with her head and heart full of her humane protector.

In Continuation.

What a ſcene have I juſt gone thro', Nancy! I ſtill ſhudder at the thoughts of it. Recollecting, when I had written to the bottom of my laſt page that I had ſcarce ſeen my ſiſter during the whole day, I roſe in order to go to her apartment. Before I reached the door of my own Mr. Davers made his appearance.

"Whither are you going *now*, Kitty?" ſaid he, ſeizing both my hands.

I am going to my ſiſter's dreſſing-room, Sir, is ſhe not there?

"Yes—but you and I muſt have a little converſation firſt—To tell you the truth, Kitty, "I don't like my wife's behaviour to Hythe! I "have not been pleaſed with it for ſome time. I "have been talking to her very ſeriouſly about it, "and ſhe has anſwered me in a manner by no "means ſatisfactory. When a man is willing "to wink at the liberties which the preſent "faſhion allows a fine woman, becauſe he has

"taken

" taken greater himſelf, ought ſhe to upbraid " him for gallantries into which every man of " ſpirit naturally falls in ſome part of his life? " Gallantries from which he would, moſt pro- " bably, reſtrain himſelf, if they were over- " looked?"

You may eaſily imagine how I felt at the delivery of this preamble.—Sitting down by me, he proceeded.—" I wiſh, Kitty, that you would " talk to your ſiſter, and try to perſuade her to " be more diſcreet. You are a very good girl " yourſelf; you are indeed one of the beſt girls " with whom I am acquainted: there is a mild- " neſs in your diſpoſition, and a ſweetneſs in " your temper which are exceedingly pleaſing."

Here I looked ſurpriſed again.

" 'Tis true child," continued he, " you are " exceedingly amiable, though you ſeem to be " not at all conſcious of your powers, and I " heartily wiſh I had fixed upon *you*"—(taking my hand, which I withdrew, quite amazed.)

" Don't be angry with me, Kitty—I eſteem " you too much to offend you: in return, there- " fore, endeavour to make my wife ſenſible of " the impropriety of her conduct; and aſſure " her, that whatever ſhe may think of it, ſhe " will never reclaim *me* by permitting Lord " Hythe to take liberties with her: liberties " which he never would have taken, I firmly " believe, if ſhe had not given him encourage- " ment."

I was

I was ſtruck, Kitty, on hearing my ſiſter thus accuſed: I was ſhocked at an accuſation which I thought a falſe one: for though I was well aſſured of her partiality for Lord Hythe, I never had in the leaſt imagined that ſhe would have ſuffered any unbecoming freedoms—and yet I could hardly imagine that he would have preſumed to behave improperly if he had not been indiſcreetly encouraged by her.—Shocked at the accuſation, I was not, immediately, able to open my lips—at laſt I made a ſhift to get out a few words. After having expreſſed my ſurprize, I attempted to be an apologiſt—"Perhaps"—"Hold, Kitty," ſaid he, ſtopping me ſhort, "you cannot excuſe her. I have ſeen her ſuffer "Hythe to kiſs her—Yes, he kiſſed her, and "ſhe only made reſiſtance juſt ſufficient to let "him know how much ſhe was pleaſed with his "careſſes. Can you apologize for ſuch a beha-"viour?"

Imagine my diſtreſs, Nancy—Think what I felt—I could only exclaim, "Oh Mr. Davers!"

"Nay, upon my ſoul, I tell you nothing but "the truth; and did I not feel *ſome* affection "for her, were I not unwilling for both our "ſakes to make this affair publick, I would ef-"fectually prevent the *laſt* affront to my honour "as a huſband. However, I am determined to "get rid of Hythe."

I ſtarted—my face was in a glow—Perceiving my agitation—"Don't be alarmed, child, I am "not ſo mad as to throw myſelf into a dangerous

"ſituation

"ſituation becauſe my wife is like other women "of the world. I ſhould be a greater fool than "herſelf to expoſe my perſon to a ſword or a "piſtol on *her* account; but I will, without de- "lay, inſiſt upon Hythe's leaving my houſe: "and if Lucy does not totally change her man- "ners from what *I* have ſaid, and from what *you* "will, I hope, ſay to her, ſhe may ſeverely re- "pent of her extreme indiſcretion. I do not, "indeed, believe that her conduct has yet been "abſolutely *criminal*, but it has certainly been "highly imprudent, and utterly inexcuſable. "Let her, therefore, be upon her guard for the "future; few huſbands, Kitty — though I do "not want to derive any merit from my lenity "— would be ſo mild upon ſo provoking an oc- "caſion. I don't pretend to be faultleſs; I am "willing to make ſome allowances for Lucy's "failings: let her plead the force of faſhion, and "the infatuation of example; let her plead her "own pretty face, and her admirer's ſeducing "tongue—but let her take care not to repeat the "follies which ſhe has committed. Had I not "firſt been guilty of unpardonable errors myſelf, "I ſhould have recourſe to far more rigorous "meaſures—But go, Miſs Oſwald," added he, preſſing my hand, "go and try to make your "ſiſter act more wiſely than ſhe has done."

Glad was I to leave him. I ran, I rather flew, to Lucy's dreſſing-room, though I trembled all the way I went. I found her walking up and down, exceedingly agitated. Her dreſs was diſ-

ordered;

ordered; her eyes were full of tears; yet there were ſtrong ſigns of anger in her countenace; ſtronger than I had ever ſeen in it. She really frighted me. I did not know what to ſay to her, and therefore, with a look, and in a tone which ſufficiently diſcovered my ſenſations, I aſked her what was the matter.

"The matter?" replied ſhe; "the matter?—"Oh don't aſk me—yet I muſt tell you that Mr. "Davers is the moſt unworthy of men."

"Bleſs me," anſwered I, "what makes you "think ſo? What has he done?"

"I have ſcarce breath to tell you; he has—"that ever I ſhould live to hear ſuch an accuſa-"tion from the man who ſeemed, ſo lately, to "adore me!—But I was groſsly deluded—he "never—no, Kitty, Davers never loved me."

Here a torrent of tears rolled down her cheeks. I was ſilent, waiting for an abatement of the ſtorm, and fearing, at the ſame time, that my brother had not been too haſty. Had Lucy felt herſelf guiltleſs, ſhe would not, ſurely, have appeared ſo much aggrieved by the accuſation levelled at her: would not have been ſo greatly offended at it. We are naturally ſorry, indeed, when we are wrongfully ſuſpected, but we ſhould not be inflamed againſt our accuſers. The innocent have reaſon to be calm, the guilty are generally prone to an intemperate behaviour, becauſe they are too well convinced that they merit the aſperſions pointed at them. I was ſo much pained to find my ſiſter's carriage ſo furious, as I looked

looked upon it very unfavourable to her, that I ſat down, and wept with her. *My* tears, indeed, flowed long after hers, for my diſtreſs increaſed on my reflecting upon the diſagreeable taſk I had undertaken. I felt myſelf under a neceſſity of talking to her in a more ſerious ſtrain than I had yet done, but the traces of haughtineſs and diſdain in her face were ſo diſcouraging, that I almoſt dreaded to enter upon the ſubject which had immediately occaſioned my viſit to her: and yet I thought the opportunity was particularly inviting. I therefore began, by telling her, I had been rendered very unhappy by Mr. Davers's intelligence, repeating it. "I am extremely "ſorry to find that you have—inadvertantly I "dare believe, given my brother the ſlighteſt "reaſon to ſuſpect you."

And ſo you think of me as he does? You are both in the ſame ſtory I find. 'Tis mighty well. But indeed, Kitty, I never expected *you* to give credit to ſo infamous a charge againſt me. However, I ſee through this iniquitous affair. Mr. Davers is willing to have a ready apology for his own inconſtancy, and you are a poor love-ſick girl, jealous of a man who never troubled himſelf about you.

I confeſs, Nancy, that my pride was piqued a little by the latter part of this ſpeech—but as I felt myſelf blameable for giving way to a paſſion which I ought never to have indulged, I ſtood corrected, and with all poſſible mildneſs replied, "As I never had any expectations of the pre-

"ference

"ference you hint at, I cannot be jealous about "it, and I hope I ſhall have ſtrength of mind "enough, ſhould I ever be the credulous girl you "ſuppoſe me to be, to do my duty."

"And ſo Miſs," anſwered ſhe, "you reckon "it your duty to think ill of your ſiſter?"

This was too much—I could not bear it, Nancy. I burſt into a flood of tears—I could not ſpeak—I never was ſo much hurt—I found it impoſſible to perform the taſk impoſed on me by Mr. Davers—I ran haſtily out of the room.

Walking through the gallery I met Mr. Shelburne—He ſtarted at ſeeing me in a diſtreſsful condition. Seizing my hands, he with a look and voice expreſſing the greateſt concern, aſked me what was the matter. I could not make a reply: my heart was too full: my tears flowed very faſt. I ſuffered him to lead me whether he pleaſed. The muſic-room being neareſt, I entered it: I ſat down, but could not yet relate the cauſe of my affliction.

"For heaven's ſake," cried he, ſtill more deeply affected, "tell me what has happened to "you. You diſtract me with thoſe tears. I "cannot bear to ſee you in this way. I would "ſacrifice my life to remove your grief, Kitty, "or to leſſen it."

I could not anſwer him—I broke from him; I roſe to go. Paſſing by the window I ſaw Lord Hythe's ſervants loading his chaiſe with his baggage. My fooliſh heart ſunk within me. I turned

turned from ſo unpleaſing a ſight, and ſitting down again, endeavoured to ſtifle my emotions by letting my face fall upon my hands, which reſted on Shelburne's ſhoulder. I ſobbed aloud.

"Kitty, my deareſt Kitty," ſaid he, eagerly, "ſpeak, do, ſpeak to me.—Give me an oppor-"tunity to relieve you."

"What can I ſay? replied I," lifting up my eyes, "what can I ſay, but that I am more "miſerable than ever?—Mr. and Mrs. Davers "have quarrelled. Upon my only hinting a "wiſh to my ſiſter that ſhe would act in a leſs "exceptionable manner, ſhe grew extremely "angry with me: and her unkind behaviour has "ſo lowered my ſpirits, that I know not when "I ſhall be able to recover them."

He looked as if he believed me; yet I fancied that he imputed not a few of my tears to Lord Hythe's approaching departure; ſo ready was my conſcience to accuſe me.

To increaſe my confuſion, Lord Hythe, juſt at that inſtant, made his appearance, to take his leave.

For my part, I confeſs I trembled all over, and my Lord ſeemed to be no leſs agitated.

He advanced towards me—changed colour—took hold of my hand, and ſhook exceedingly. "I am come to bid you adieu, Miſs Oſwald," ſaid he, with a ſtriking diſcompoſure in his face.

Though I knew that he was going from the *Wood*, I was ſo ſilly as to ſtart at this addreſs. Mr. Shelburne told me, afterwards, that I turn-

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ed pale; I am ſure I did, becauſe he ran to ſupport me, but Lord Hythe had ſeized my hand before. "I wiſh you happy, Miſs Oſwald," continued he, preſſing it, and fetching a deep ſigh. He then, after having taken leave of Mr. Shelburne, left us.

Mr. Shelburne flew to me as ſoon as my Lord was gone, and offered me a bottle of *Eau de luce*. I was very much chagrined at his ſeeing me ſo fooliſhly affected. I bluſhed at my ridiculous carriage, and ſtrove to make amends for it by a number of apologies; but Mr. Shelburne had too great a ſhare of penetration and humanity to be either deceived by it or to be offended at it. With a ſmile, with a benevolent, compaſſionate ſmile, which endeared him to me (if I may uſe that expreſſion) and compelled me, in a manner, to unboſom myſelf to him, he ſat down by me, and throwing his arm round me, entreated me to lean on him, as he perceived that I was on the point of fainting. "Do not be under any "reſtraint with your friend, Miſs Oſwald," ſaid he; "no man is more entirely devoted to a "woman than I am to you."

Animated by this aſſurance, doubly animated by the manner in which it was delivered, I began to take breath. I looked up to him as my chief, my only comforter, and I thanked him for his affectionate conſideration for me. Of the moſt rational arguments imaginable did he avail himſelf, in order to ſooth my mind to peace, but I

ſtill

ſtill feel—oh—Nancy, how much do I feel for my ſiſter—my dear Lucy!—What, what will become of her?—Pity *her*, and pity alſo,

Your afflicted,

Your embarraſſed friend,

C. O.

LETTER LX.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

DAVERS having been highly provoked at the conduct of his wife, and of Lord Hythe, has deſired the latter to leave his houſe. It is ſurpriſing that ſo ſpirited a ſtep was not productive of a rencounter, but I actually believe that Hythe's violent paſſion for Mrs. Davers, kept his ſword in its ſcabbard. I am very glad, indeed, that Davers has been able to get rid of his lordſhip without any ſanguinary proceedings. He told me ſome days ago that he ſaw how things were going, and therefore thought it quite neceſſary to put a ſtop to them in time. In conſequence of that determination, he informed my lord that, as he had obſerved a particularity in his behaviour to Mrs. Davers, which he could not have expected from him, and of which he could not, poſſibly, approve, he wiſhed he would remove himſelf, for the preſent, from Beechwood.

Hythe changed colour at ſo cavalier a ſpeech, and replied, after ſome heſitation, "You are "totally miſtaken; but ſince you can be guilty "of ſo exceſſive a weakneſs as to think ſo mean-

"ly

"ly of a man whom you have always looked "upon as your friend, and who has ever had a sin-"cere friendſhip for you, I ſhall with infinite "ſatisfaction leave you to enjoy your errors, of "which you may perhaps, too late, repent.

Immediately ordering his poſt chaiſe he went into Mrs. Davers's apartment, followed by Davers.—He then came to take leave of Kitty, who was in tears, poor girl, on having been ſeverely reprehended by her ſiſter, for attempting to render her ſenſible of her indiſcretion. The preparations made by Lord Hythe for his departure, juſt at that critical juncture, abſolutely overpowered her. I was afraid that ſhe would have fainted in my arms. She ſtruggled nobly, however—ſhe ſtrove, at firſt, to conceal her torturing emotions; ſhe, afterwards, honeſtly diſcloſed all her ſenſations with ſo charming, ſo uncommon a *Naïveté*, and diſcovered ſuch an exquiſite ſenſibility, that I adored her—She has fixed me hers—I can never love another woman. By ſo freely unfolding every ſecret of her heart to me, by ſo readily accepting of my friendly offers, and by appearing to be relieved by the efforts which I made to calm her unquiet mind, ſhe has filled me with tranſports almoſt equal to thoſe wich I ſhould feel on being her acknowledged lover. But never muſt I expect ſuch a bleſſing—yet to fold her to my fond heart, throbbing with compaſſion for her diſtreſs, to wipe away her tears, to huſh her ſorrows, to gaze on her ſweet face in a momentary interval of

compoſure, and to liſten to her muſical voice, while ſhe is gratefully thanking me for my conſiderate and tender behaviour——theſe, theſe are raptures not to be expreſſed—theſe, theſe are raptures which ſhe, condeſcendingly, permits me to enjoy. Oh! Hepburne! of what a heavenly temper is this charming girl poſſeſſed!

LETTER LXI.

From the Same to the Same.

YOU tell me that, as Hythe is now gone, there is room for me to hope.—You do not know Miſs Oſwald—all my *indulgencies* I derive entirely from the ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition is, indeed, angelic, but a meer angel will not gratify *my* wiſhes neither. I love her as the moſt amiable of *women*; I wiſh to appear to her in the ſame light as a *man*. I cannot be happy with her *friendſhip* alone; and it is not, I fear, in the excellent girl's power to bleſs me with her *love*. Since *that* is, therefore, never to be obtained, I am ſtriving to appear contented with the eſteem with which ſhe honours me. Her deareſt female friend, does not, I believe, know ſo much of her heart as I do.

Yeſterday, while ſhe was almoſt forgetting her own ſorrows, weeping over the diſtreſſes of a neighbouring cottager and his numerous family, I begged her to dry her eyes, telling her that I would immediately relieve them.

When I returned, ſhe ran to me, and with a ſmile, which overpaid me, for having made myſelf

ſelf happy by giving aſſiſtance to the unfortunate, told me I was the beſt of men. Then putting her arm under mine, as we walked, ſhe aſked me how ſhe ſhould reward me.

I replied, "I have at this inſtant, my dear "Kitty, ſo intenſe a pain in my head, that I am "almoſt rendered incapable of receiving any "favours from you, were you ever ſo well in-"clined to beſtow them upon me."

"Good God!" cried ſhe, with pitying accents, "you are ill—how could I hurry you "about ſo?—But indeed, I did not know that "you were ſo much indiſpoſed. Come, ſit "down upon this ſeat, and keep yourſelf quiet: "I hope you will by ſo doing find relief."

I ſat down by her, and laid my weary head upon her ſhoulder. She permitted me to hold her dear hands in mine, but when I offerred to ſpeak ſhe intreated me to try to compoſe myſelf. "Do you chat, then, or ſing, my Kit-"ty," ſaid I, "to lull me."

She complied, and poured forth notes, melodious notes, which heaped new fuel upon the flame which ſhe had raiſed in my breaſt, in the poſition I was placed, and maddened me with delight. I even fancied—fool, fool!—that ſhe felt ſomething more than pity for me. My pain was charmed away in a moment—I thought of nothing but the lovely, tranſporting creature, who never looked half ſo amiable before. I ventured to ſteal *one* melting kiſs. I died with deſire to try if ſhe was ſtill cold to every thing but

friendſhip. I preſſed her lips with all the ardour which I felt—ſhe received my preſſures neither with anger nor diſdain, but ſhe received them with an indifference which froze my ſoul. I let her hands drop out of mine—I became almoſt petrified with vexation—my pain returned—I roſe. I walked away—ſhe followed me. "Tho' "I ought to be angry with you," ſaid the dear bluſhing girl, "yet as you juſt now greatly "obliged me, and as I really believe that you are "out of order, I am willing to excuſe your free- "doms; conditionally, however. You muſt "return to the houſe, and endeavour to get "ſomething which may be of ſervice to you."

"Nothing upon earth," replied I, "but *your* "love can reſtore me to health—were I but aſ- "ſured, Kitty, that I was well beloved by you, "as you are by me, all my diſorders would "ſoon diſappear."

"What then muſt I do?" cried ſhe, I muſt "feign a little tenderneſs to adminiſter conſo- "lation to you."

"Oh no,"—anſwered I, "let me not, I be- "ſeech you, be tantalized—rather let me be "deprived of all hopes than flattered with falſe "ones."

"What can I do then, Mr. Shelburne?"—(looking down)—"I cannot—"

"Too well I know that you cannot oblige "yourſelf to feel *my* ſenſations. Your wiſh "ſhall be ſufficient—ſay, only ſay, that you "*wiſh* you *could* love me, Kitty——."

"I do,

"I do, I do," replied ſhe eagerly; I wiſh I "*could* with all my heart."

Catching her again in my arms, I ſeized, without being interrupted by her, another kiſs.

"I hope you will not now complain of me," ſaid ſhe, diſengaging herſelf: "I hope you will "do as I deſired."

I was inexpreſſibly charmed with her amiable behaviour; I was tranſported with her undiſſembled endeavours to give ſome eaſe to a heart which throbs, which ſighs for her alone. Would ſhe but conſent to be mine, time, and my unwearied efforts to ſoften her to tenderneſs might, poſſibly, warm her to return my paſſion. Yet I love her ſo truly, ſo ſincerely wiſh to ſee her happy, that I cannot bring myſelf to aſk her to beſtow her perſon without the approbation of her heart. Every man may not behold her with Lord Hythe's frigid indifference, may not be blind to her many perfections; but another man may be as agreeable to her as his lordſhip is, and be as much in love with her as I am. Who, indeed, can look upon her and not doat as I do?

Davers repents of his choice a thouſand times a day; and calls himſelf a curſed fool for not having made Kitty, inſtead of Lucy, his wife. I have always, you know, given the preference to Kitty, and chiefly on account of her mind, which beams forth ſtrongly in her face, and her perſonal attractions are certainly very much heightened by the luſtre which her intellectual accompliſhments throw over them: yet tho' I

admire Kitty with a warmth mounting to enthuſiaſm, I muſt own that Mrs. Davers is far the more regular beauty. However, after having, made this confeſſion, I muſt alſo add, that I would not change Kitty, were ſhe the woman I wiſh her to be, for the moſt perfect *beauty* in the univerſe: as Kitty *is*, I can never love any woman but *her*.

Kitty has often declared that her ſiſter was married to Davers with the ſtrongeſt prepoſſeſſions in his favour; and has often told me that ſhe believed her ſiſter would not have felt her affections alienated from him, would not have beſtowed a thought upon any other man, if *he* had not pointed out to her the road to inconſtancy. Poor Lucy!—ſhe will not, I fear, be ſoon brought back, if ever, to her firſt attachment. Diſcontent ſits lowering upon her brow, whenever ſhe appears, and I think I ſee a ſtorm gathering. Davers is not much more calm, but ſeems to believe himſelf authorized by the pride and coquetry of her, whom he ſelected from her ſex to make him domeſtically happy, to rove at random wherever he pleaſes. His nurſery maid is at preſent his *favourite*. I am ſorry to ſee theſe amiable people (for amiable they are, in ſpite of all their indiſcretions, ſo mixed are the characters of all human beings) ſo wretched by entertaining wrong ideas of domeſtic felicity, a felicity which I could, I flatter myſelf, enjoy, with a true taſte

with

with my Kitty: without *her* all the world is nothing to,

Your ſincere,
But diſſatisfied friend,
C. S.

LETTER LXII.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

I Don't know whether I have done right, but I have taken an infinite deal of pains to make myſelf in love with Shelburne, and yet I am juſt where I was. I have even ſuffered him to take liberties, my Nancy, which ſhould not, perhaps, be allowed to a much more favoured lover, merely becauſe I wiſh to be affected by his tender behaviour to me; but all in vain. I actually hate myſelf, for being ſo inſenſible to ſo much merit: great is Shelburne's merit as a man, extreme in his delicacy as a lover: no man, ſurely, ever felt the tender paſſion in ſo forcible a manner—he trembles whenever he comes near me, and his emotions are ſo violent, that I pity him from my heart. His ſighs affect me, beyond expreſſion. Certainly, Nancy, I cannot be totally unhappy with a man who ſeems to breathe for *me* alone; he flies to gratify my every wiſh, and ſometimes even anticipates my deſires. He gueſſes, frequently, by my looks, what I would have, and before I can articulate it, renders the articulation of it unneceſſary. Strange! that I cannot be capable of loving a man ſo completely formed to pleaſe! a man for whom many women are,

doubtleſs, in a ſighing condition. Poor Fanny Ruſſel! how happy would *ſhe* be in *my* place!—She pines becauſe ſhe cannot make the leaſt impreſſion upon him; but very diſcreetly keeps out of his way, leſt by often converſing with him, ſhe ſhould only increaſe the diſquietude of her mind on his account, for he, indiſputably, improves upon a nearer acquaintance. Would to heaven my dear ſiſter thought ſo prudently!—Greatly do I fear that ſhe thinks on Hythe too much for her peace—ſhe has ſcarce ſmiled ſince he left Beechwood: however, as Mr. Davers diſcovers a ſtronger paſſion for Mrs. Biddy, every day, his intimacy with that girl may conſiderably heighten her uneaſineſs. Let us hope her uneaſineſs ariſes entirely from that intimacy.

My brother has been theſe two days at the Wood, but looks ſo ſpiritleſs, and ſeems to be ſo depreſſed with melancholy, that my ſurprize and my pity are equally excited by his unhappy appearance.—In ſhort, Nancy, I am not ſatisfied with any body about me. What a poor, wayward creature am I grown!—Tell me, tho' whether you approve of my trying to love Shelburne. Be aſſured that no man upon earth is more deſerving than he is of the heart of,

Your ever affectionate,

C. O.

LET-

LETTER LXIII.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

YOU tell me that you will poſtpone your viſit to this place, till we are a little ſettled. I don't know when we ſhall be ſettled: perhaps never, for here is nobody but Kitty who acts in the leaſt, like a rational creature.

Davers, not being able to bring Miſs Ruſſel to his terms—he has, indeed, actually frighted her from the family—is now fully attached to his little daughter's maid, a girl who has nothing to loſe, if I am not very much miſtaken, and who will, therefore, endeavour to make the beſt bargain for *herſelf* by getting all ſhe can out of him. I have given him a hint of this, but he is, at preſent, deaf to all my admonitions—he will think better of what I have ſaid to him by and by: I can truſt him here: ſuch a low-born girl, without education, without either ſenſe or ſenſibility, cannot long give pleaſure to a man of taſte—and a man of taſte Davers certainly is—but I trembled for him, I confeſs, while he was fond of Sally Pigot, as *ſhe* had certainly ſomething very prejudicing in her perſon and manner, and was drawn from the line of virtue by *love* alone: I do not wonder, therefore, that Davers was ſo loth to part with her: on the other hand, this Biddy, is a downright mercenary devil, who is reſolved to raiſe money upon her perſon, and who is ready to ſell herſelf to *him* who has the

longeſt purſe. By the way, what a wretch is this Biddy, to be employed as a ſervant by a woman of character in her houſe!—Surely people are too careleſs with regard to the morals of their domeſtics, eſpecially of thoſe immediately about themſelves and their children—Davers's little daughter is, indeed, too young to imbibe any bad ideas, to contract any vicious habits from her nurſery-maid; but if her mother has been ſo negligent in the choice of a ſervant to attend her now, ſhe will, probably, be not more careful about her hereafter, and Miſs may be put under the tuition of a French governeſs, with principles no better than thoſe by which Mrs. Biddy is actuated. Many, many gallantries of the daughters of this *improving* age, and ſome elopements too are chiefly conducted, and afterwards carried on by modern domeſtics of this kind; who are not only entirely deſtitute of good ſentiments, but alſo low-born and low-bred: conſequently, the moſt unfit perſons imaginable, to ſuperintend the morals, or to embelliſh the minds of the young ladies committed to their care: very little capable are they of teaching them what they ought, principally, to know; ſtill leſs capable of making them properly acquainted with the language of which they pretend to be miſtreſſes. How is it poſſible for a girl to ſpeak the French language with purity, or to write it with correctneſs, who receives all her inſtructions from a *gouvernante* juſt imported from one of the *Provinces?* How will ſhe figure in a *Pariſian* circle?

—When-

—Whenever I hear a *mongrel Madamoiſelle*, chattering away, and venting a great deal of vile language in a *fort mauvais ton*, I always think of Chaucer's Abbeſs, who ſpoke the French of *Stratford ſchool by Bow*, and I would rather put my daughter to a hair-dreſſer, if I wanted to *frenchify* her completely, as he would in all probability, prove the beſt *teacher* of the two.—Serioufly, no man can be too nice about the education of his daughter: a mother, indeed, *ſhould* take upon her that important charge: but for *that* charge how few modern mothers are qualified! How few are able—and fewer ſtill are willing—to bring up their own repreſentatives! —But I am got upon a ſubject on which I cannot enlarge as I find myſelf diſpoſed, without taking up too much of your time at preſent, and will, therefore, return to our wronghead-family.

Charles Oſwald has been here ſome days. Since his reſidence here Lady Juliet has viſited us often: yet I do not find they are upon the beſt terms in the world together: he is very thoughtful, not to ſay, melancholy, and affects a diſcretion—at leaſt to *me*, tho' he actually *does* ſhun her—with which ſhe appears to be not at all pleaſed; ſhe is not, however, out of humour with him; ſhe is extremely obliging, and never ſpeaks to him but in the ſofteſt accents; looking at the ſame time as if ſhe was thoroughly conſcious of his power over her. I ſhall take an opportunity to talk to my *youth* once more about this affair, as I fear that he is deeply wounded, though

though he endeavours to ſtruggle with the arrow which has pierced his heart.

LETTER XLIV.

From the Same to the Same.

I Have queſtioned Charles cloſely, in a *tête-à-tête*, about Lady Juliet. He has confeſſed that they had had a great quarrel, and that he was determined to conquer his paſſion for her, if poſſible. He really takes a great deal of pains to conquer it. He behaves, ſometimes, with a reſpectful coolneſs, and ſometimes with a chilling indifference, which touches her moſt ſenſibly, which pains her to the quick. She is perpetually here; perpetually upon the watch; her exceſſive attention to all his looks, words, and actions, gives him, I ſee plainly, no ſmall pleaſure, though he ſtrives to conceal his pleaſing ſenſations.

We were all in the garden laſt night. Kitty, that angel Kitty, ſuffered me to keep by her ſide, to liſten to her, to talk to her: nay, ſhe once or twice leaned on my arm, and ſung, at my requeſt, after having refuſed every body elſe. Yet this charming condeſcenſion will be my ruin, as ſhe ſtill appears to feel no inclination to accompliſh my wiſhes, and never will I urge her to render herſelf unhappy for *my* ſake. I love her too ſincerely to deſire to make her wretched in any ſhape.

We were all, as I ſaid, in the garden. Lady Juliet affected to be mighty fond of Mrs. Davers, who

who ſeemed very much diſſatisfied with her Ladyſhip for pinning herſelf cloſe to her. Charles walked with Miſs. Ruſſel, who had, that afternoon, attended her aunt in her viſit to Beechwood. As to Davers, he was ſolacing himſelf, I ſuppoſe, with his Dulcinea.

On a ſudden a loud ſhriek from Lady Juliet alarmed us all. Charles inſtantly left Miſs Ruſſel, and flew to her relief. "Good God! "what is the matter?" cried he.

"O I am ſtung! I am ſtung!" replied ſhe, leaning on the arm which he offered to ſupport her.

"Where? where?" cried Charles in an agony.

"Don't aſk me now; I muſt go home; a "monſtrous waſp has, I dare ſay, got into my "ſleeve—Do, pray Mr. Oſwald, order my "chariot—Mrs. Davers will excuſe me."

Mrs. Davers, Kitty, and Miſs Ruſſel, all endeavoured to prevail on her Ladyſhip to let them look at her arm, and to apply ſome remedy, but to no purpoſe: and Charles ſeemed to be in full as great a hurry to decamp as *ſhe* was. He flew, immediately, to call her ſervants; *I* waited on her to the houſe, as ſhe politely inſiſted upon Mrs. Davers's remaining in the garden.

When ſhe was ſeated in the chariot, Oſwald ſaid, "I will go home with you," and ſtepped in directly after her. Some ſudden whim in the Lady, I fancy—a jealous fit, perhaps. How inconſtant, how inconſiſtent, is every woman but Kitty Oſwald!

LET-

LETTER LXV.

From the Same to the Same.

I Was right. Charles did not return from Lady Juliet's till between twelve and one. We were all retired to our reſpective apartments.

Hearing my voice, as I paſſed his chamber-door this morning, he begged me to come in. The lazy rogue was ſtill in bed. He made an apology for his ſluggiſhneſs, adding that, as I had diſcovered myſelf ſo intereſted in his affairs, he wiſhed to tell me he was in a fair way of being the happieſt of men.

I congratulated him cordially upon his felicity, and deſired to be acquainted with the event which had occaſioned it.

"I informed you," ſaid he, "of my reſolu-
"tion to break off my intimacy with Lady Juliet,
"unleſs I could bring her to an *éclairciſſement* in
"my favour. We had a violent quarrel the
"evening before I came hither: it coſt me, I
"confeſs, very dear to keep up an appearance of
"reſentment, yet I ſtrove hard; and till ſhe
"came to this place, I could vent my uneaſineſs,
"ſometimes, alone, to my great relief. But
"when I ſaw her, the day after I quitted her,
"with an unaffected ſweetneſs in her counte-
"nance, and a languiſhing kind of ſorrow for
"having ſo often refuſed my requeſts, I was al-
"moſt tempted to make it up with her without
"any ſolicitation on *her* ſide. Imagine, then,
"what

"what I felt when ſhe took every ſtep not only "to engage my attention, but ſeemed ſtudious "to pleaſe me. I was touched to the very ſoul: "yet I ſtill ſtood out, as I did not believe I could, "by acting in a different manner, bring her to "my terms. I pretended to diſregard every "thing ſhe ſaid, every thing ſhe did, to oblige "me. At length, not well knowing how to "ſupport the character I had aſſumed without "being taken notice of, I attached myſelf to "Miſs Ruſſel in the garden, merely to prevent "the alteration in my carriage to Lady Juliet "from being obſerved by any body but herſelf. "On a ſudden I heard her ſhriek. I really "thought ſhe had met with ſome dreadful acci-"dent, and was wild to know what had occaſion-"ed ſuch an exclamation. When ſhe talked of "having been ſtung by a waſp, I felt as if I had "been pierced with a ſword. As ſoon as the "chariot drove from the gate, I preſſed her "hand tenderly, and declared how much I was "terrified on account of the hurt which ſhe had "received. Gently reclining her head on my "boſom, ſhe replied, Cruel creature! can you "be ſo affected by the ſting of a trifling inſect, "after having inflicted a wound on my heart "which nothing but a total change in your beha-"viour can cure? You may be ſure that I haſti-"ly and eagerly demanded the meaning of thoſe "enigmatical words. She then informed me "that, by neglecting her, and taking ſo much "notice of Fanny Ruſſel, I had almoſt deprived

"her

"her of her reaſon; that ſhe was half mad for
"ſome excuſe to draw me to her, in order to
"know certainly if I had given her up or not,
"and that, on hearing a waſp buzzing in her
"ſleeve, ſhe immediately thought of trying
"whether ſhe could not, by making me believe
"that ſhe was ſtung by it, alarm me, and de-
"tach me from Miſs Ruſſel.—My ſtratagem ſo
"far ſucceeded, added ſhe, that I am ſenſible
"you would be concerned to behold me wretch-
"ed, but I am ſtill uncertain, continued ſhe,
"with a heavy ſigh, while tears dropped from
"her lovely eyes, I am ſtill uncertain whether I
"am the unrivalled poſſeſſor of your valuable
"heart." Be not uncertain a moment longer,
"cried I, quite melted by her tender apprehen-
"ſions; I ever did, I ever ſhall prefer you to all
"other women in the world, and only chatted
"with Miſs Ruſſel becauſe I wanted to hide the
"diſquiet I felt on your refuſing to give me any
"ſtriking proofs of your love. And if you knew
"the true cauſe of my unſatisfactory carriage to
"to you, anſwered ſhe, you would ceaſe to
"blame me. If you knew how much I have
"endeavoured to act for *your* advantage, and
"with how much anxiety my ſelf-denial has
"been attended, you would no longer, Oſwald,
"keep up an air of indifference, which is, I
"honeſtly own, inſupportable. Tell me then,
"anſwered I eagerly, tell me all your motives,
"and relieve me, alſo, from a load of diſquie-
"tude which is equally, if not more, intolerable.

"—And

"—And why will you not ſuffer me to retain "this one ſecret? ſaid ſhe, with a bewitching "tenderneſs, riſing from my arms, Why will "you not be content to love me in my own way? "eſpecially when I aſſure you that you will find "your account in it; that you will be the hap-"pier in the end for having acted agreeably to "my fancy?—Her aſſurances, however, were "by no means ſatisfactory; I thought myſelf "much the beſt judge of what would contribute "to my own felicity: I therefore, inſiſtingly, "preſſed her to comply with a requeſt, the re-"fuſal of which would render me ſo miſerable.— "In return ſhe told me, that as ſhe really loved "me ſincerely, and had never yet loved any "other man, ſhe was determined to make *herſelf* "happy by making *me* ſo, if I would wait with "patience a few years!—A few years? exclaim-"ed I,—impoſſible. Beſides, what opinion "would you have of a lover who could tamely "ſubſcribe to ſuch a propoſal?—Well then, re-"plied ſhe, with a look of ineffable ſatisfaction, "If you marry me now, you will have an ex-"penſive wife, and no fortune. Mr. Creſwell "made me, 'tis true, a very large jointure, as "I brought him but an inconſiderable fortune, "for he ſettled three thouſand a year on me on "condition that I never married again: if I "marry I loſe my jointure, and ſhall only re-"ceive five thouſand pounds in lieu of it. This "anecdote is not generally known: Indeed I "was not acquainted with it myſelf till his death.

"As

"As ſoon as I came to conſider what a change a "ſecond marriage would occaſion in my circum- "ſtances, particularly if I ſhould happen to like "a man who was not in an affluent ſituation, I "reſolved to live as privately as I could in order "to lay up ſomething like an equivalent to the "loſs I ſhould ſuſtain by altering my condition. "My acquaintance with you induced me ſtill "more to purſue my frugal plan, that you might "be aſſiſted by it: now *you*, like an impatient "creature, would quite demoliſh my ſcheme, "and either leave me unhappy, or by marrying "me make me a beggar.—Here ſhe ceaſed ſpeak- "ing; but her eloquent eyes ſtill aſſured me "that I was dear to her. Charmed with having "an opportunity to ſhew her that *my* paſſion was "entirely diſintereſted, I thanked her for her in- "formation; declaring, however, that I loved "her too ſincerely, too tenderly to wiſh for the "poſſeſſion of any thing but her perſon and her "heart; adding, that if ſhe would condeſcend "to continue to live retired, I ſhould be happy, "and that I had reaſon to expect ſomething to- "wards the ſupport of a family.—You talk like "a thoughtleſs young fellow, cried ſhe, but as "you give me, by ſo talking, a ſtrong proof of "your tenderneſs, I love you the better for what "you have ſaid. I am aſhamed to make ſuch a "confeſſion, yet, indeed, Oſwald, you deſerve "a woman with a better fortune than mine: I "ſhall, therefore, only ruin you by gratifying "your wiſhes. You may believe, continued

"he,

"he, that I would not ſuffer her to ſtart any "more difficulties. I would not, indeed, leave "her till ſhe permitted me to fix this day fort-"night for the day of our union. She then "owned that ſhe had already ſaved five thouſand "pounds: ſo that with the additional five thou-"ſand payable upon her marriage, and with "what my father will, moſt probably, advance "upon ſuch an occaſion, we may contrive to "live very comfortably in a retired way; and I "ſolemnly aſſure you that I had, a thouſand "times, rather live in a cottage with Lady "Juliet, than in a palace with any other wo-"man."

If Lady Juliet has dealt ingenuouſly, ſhe is certainly in love with my young friend, who will, I dare ſay, make her a very tender huſband. Before I left him he aſked me if Kitty was become wiſe enough to accept of me.—"The girl "muſt be out of her ſenſes if ſhe does not," continued he. "I will talk to her."

"By no means," replied I. "Never can I "approve of compulſion in any ſhape. Miſs "Oſwald is her own miſtreſs with regard to me: "ſhe is perfectly ſenſible of my high eſteem, of "my ardent love for her. She will, therefore, "act agreeably to her own inclination: I cannot "be happy if ſhe is not quite ſo."—I ſpoke the truth, Hepburne; for, tho' I earneſtly wiſh to call her mine, I ſhould be the moſt miſerable of men, as dearly as I love her, were ſhe to come

to

to my arms with a heart unſuſceptible of the glowing paſſion which I feel for *her*.

LETTER LXVI.

From the Same to the Same.

ALL that we feared has happened. Davers has found out that his wife keeps up a correſpondence with Hythe. He has been juſt now telling me that he will make an example of her. I have intreated him to be merciful, and to remember, ſhould his apprehenſions be realized —though to ſay truth, I believe he is needleſsly alarmed—that he began firſt, that he himſelf ſhewed Mrs. Davers the way to be faithleſs. He ſhakes his head, this moment; he vows revenge, the next—The whole houſe ſeems to be in the utmoſt confuſion.

Loth as I am to give Kitty the ſlighteſt uneaſineſs, I thought it altogether neceſſary to tell her what I had heard, that ſhe might have an interview with her ſiſter about it, and give her time, if ſhe is really guilty, either to make her eſcape, or to amend her conduct. Kitty thanked me ſincerely, but trembled while ſhe thanked me leſt my intelligence ſhould be confirmed.

In Continuation.

Mrs. Davers can no where be found. Kitty is in an agony of deſpair—ſhe knew not of her ſiſter's elopement, and in ſpite of all my perſuaſions to the contrary, inſiſts upon our ſetting out

to

to look for her in the village, as her *woman* ſays that her lady has gone out privately now and then, upon ſome charitable buſineſs. I cannot bear to hear Kitty ſigh as if her heart would break: I am determined to accompany her.—When we return you ſhall hear more about this unlucky affair.

Davers has diſcovered his wife—tho' we could not—at a little cottage, with Lord Hythe; but I cannot yet learn any particulars—*he* ſtorms and ſwears, and *ſhe* cries.

When we came home Mrs. Davers was upon the ſtairs, but turned at the ſight of Miſs Oſwald. "Oh Kitty," ſaid ſhe with ſtreaming eyes, "let me ſpeak to my dear Kitty."

"When you are as good as Kitty," replied Davers, "you ſhall converſe with her; not "before."

He then repeatedly commanded his wife to retire, and taking Kitty by the hand, led her into the parlour. "Having of late, frequently miſſ-"ed Mrs. Davers," ſaid he, greatly fluttered, "and finding that nobody could tell me whither "ſhe went at thoſe times, I ſuſpected that ſhe "ſtole out to meet Hythe, who lodged in the "village, I was told, and kept himſelf extreme-"ly private. This very day I aſked Mrs. Davers "to take an airing with me in the park—ſhe "ſullenly refuſed to accompany me, pleading a "particular engagement at home—I left her, "therefore, to herſelf. On my returning in "about an hour afterwards, Read informed me,

"that

" that her lady was gone to diſtribute ſome mo-
" ney among the poor tenants. I went directly
" among the farms in order to meet with her,
" and meet with her indeed I did, but in a little
" hovel which nobody would have thought of
" entering, and to enter which I ſhould not
" have attempted had not the door of it been
" ſuddenly flapped to on my approach. As I
" never had till then received ſuch treatment
" from any of the inhabitants, who, tho' poor
" were always civil; I was, I confeſs, ſtrongly
" induced to imagine, that the people who be-
" haved ſo rudely had ſome uncommon reaſons
" for their ill manners. Little, however, did
" I think of Lucy's being in ſuch a place. Ima-
" gine, then, my aſtoniſhment when I ſaw her,
" on burſting the door open, ſitting, with Hythe
" on his knees before her: his head was actually
" in her lap, and his lips were glewed to her
" hand—*ſhe* ſcreamed, and *he* roſe inſtantly.
" Turning haſtily about, he, with a diſconcert-
" ed look, cried, Davers! I did not expect to
" ſee *you* here. I believe you did not, indeed,
" replied I, but when I have conducted Mrs.
" Davers ſafe home, (advancing towards her) I
" will come back and ſettle matters with you in
" a moment. She now ſhrieked vehemently,
" and threw herſelf between us, ſaying, You
" ſhall not fight him, you ſhall not fight him
" upon *my* account, let *me* rather be puniſhed;
" tho' guilty of no actual crime, I have been very
" indiſcreet—hold then for the love of heaven

" ſeizing

" ſeizing my arm as I went to put her by). I
" made her no anſwer, I was too inflamed with
" anger; but laying my hand upon my ſword I
" was going to draw it. Flying to Hythe, ſhe
" cried, If you have that regard for me, my
" Lord, which you have often pretended to have,
" pity the miſery which I now feel, and ſave me
" from any farther remorſe: ſave Mr. Davers,
" ſave yourſelf; and as you well know that we
" are not entirely blameleſs, tho' not ſo guilty as
" we are ſuppoſed to be, oh! do not, do not
" increaſe my wretchedneſs by murder — ſay
" ſomething to ſoften his fury (looking at me at
" the ſame time with a terrified countenance)
" Hythe immediately begged her to be compoſed,
" and, ſtepping up to me, ſtammered out an
" apology, which, imperfectly delivered as it was
" and not you may imagine favourably received,
" had ſo far the deſired effect as to reſtrain me
" from ruſhing upon him unprepared to defend
" himſelf. He peremptorily refuſed to have re-
" courſe to any violent meaſures, and aſked my
" pardon more than once, for having apparently
" offended me, declaring over and over again,
" that Mrs. Davers was perfectly innocent. As
" I could not think of murdering him in cold
" blood, I ordered Lucy to come home with me.
" She followed me ſilently till we arrived here;
" ſhe then began to aſſert her innocence in ſuch
" a manner that my patience was quite exhauſt-
" ed: I therefore, bade her go up into her own
" apartment: in that apartment ſhe ſhall, I am
" determined,

"determined, remain till I have taken proper "methods to prevent her from ſo groſsly expoſing "herſelf and me again."

Here he ceaſed to ſpeak, Kitty, with her eyes drowned in tears, with her voice almoſt ſuffocated with her ſighs, intreated him, conjured him to pity, to ſpare her ſiſter. "She is young, ſhe "is thoughtleſs, ſhe meant no harm—Do pray, "dear, dear brother, have ſome compaſſion "upon her." He turned from her without making any reply. She then threw herſelf upon her knees, and ſo earneſtly requeſted him, that he raiſed her from the ground, kiſſed her, and told her ſhe was the beſt of girls; after that little ſpeech he put her into *my* arms. "Take her "away Shelburne," ſaid he, "ſhe affects me "too much, and I am reſolved not to be diverted "from the execution of my deſign."

I caught the weeping angel to my boſom, and ſtrove to comfort her, but ſhe only cried, "Oh, "ſpeak to him, Mr. Shelburne, try to prevail "on him to have mercy on my ſiſter."

To oblige her, I went in ſearch of Davers. It was with the utmoſt difficulty that I could bring him to liſten to me. I begged him to reflect not only for the ſake of Mrs. Davers, and of her family, but for his own ſake, before he carried his reſentment too far. "As Mrs. Davers "has ſo ſtrongly aſſerted her innocence—not to "mention Lord Hythe's aſſeverations—it will be "more prudent to *ſeem*, at leaſt, to give credit "to her, than to expoſe her ſtill more by a pub-

lic

"lic revenge—you will certainly, by ſo doing, "make yourſelf the talk of the town, and your "little daughter may be injured by the publica- "tion of her mother's indiſcretions." I alſo gently hinted that I feared his firſt deviation from his fidelity to his wife might have prompted her to act more inconſiderately than ſhe was naturally inclined to do. "Let me then earneſtly impor- "tune you to lay aſide all thoughts of a *ſeparation*, "for *that* muſt for ever exclude all hopes of a "future reconcilement. And ſhould ſhe really "not be guilty of a capital crime you may be "ſorry for having puſhed things too far; you "may repent, too late, of your rigorous reſolu- "tions. Some allowances ought, ſurely, to be "made for a fine young woman continually ex- "poſed to the admiration, and the flattering "aſſiduities of our ſex; and rendered ſtill more "ready to liſten to their ſoft ſpeeches by the "negligence, and indifference of the man from "whom ſhe has the moſt reaſon to expect tender- "neſs and affection."

"'Tis falſe," cried he, eagerly interrupting me—"After my return from Sally Pigot, I "treated her with more tenderneſs than ever, "and could not get a ſingle kiſs from her; not a "kind look would ſhe beſtow on me; I was, "therefore, obliged to find a civil girl where I "could, not thinking I had any buſineſs to wait "'till my wife's appetite came back again."

"Fye, Davers," ſaid I, "conſider that wo- "men are naturally more delicate than we are."

"Yes, faith—my wife has a confounded deal "of delicacy——but I fancy I ſhall ſpoil her "reliſh for a ramble from her huſband. Come, "come, Shelburne, ſay no more about her; but "when you have an idle hour write to Hepburne, "and tell him how d——bly I have been hum-"med, how curſedly I have been duped by a "pretty face, and a demure outſide——O, theſe "women, Charles, theſe women will deceive "the devil himſelf if they can: yet hold—I do "actually believe that Kitty is an honeſt girl: "but *ſhe*, *ſhe* now wants to make things out "better than they are: they all help one ano-"ther: I will not, however, ſuffer the two "ſiſters to cabal together."

"For heaven's ſake," ſaid I, foreſeeing how cruelly Kitty would be diſtreſſed by ſuch a pro-hibition—"do not deprive Miſs Oſwald of the "only conſolation left her; pray permit her to "endeavour to alleviate her ſiſter's griefs."

"It ſignifies nothing talking," replied he, "nobody ſhall ſee Mrs. Davers but myſelf—ſay "no more, go and make Kitty as eaſy as you "can."

I was forced to be contented with this anſwer, but it is impoſſible for me to deſcribe Kitty's affliction when I was neceſſitated to tell her what I have related. Do *you*, therefore, as he deſired that you might be acquainted with this diſagree-able affair, do you write to him, and perſuade him to have recourſe to milder meaſures.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER LXVII.

From the Same to the Same.

YOUR letter came too late. Davers ſet out yeſterday morning for Northumberland, with Mrs. Davers, in a poſt chaiſe and four.

Kitty is almoſt diſtracted: yet we know not what paſſed between them before their departure, we only know that Davers kept the key of the priſon-chamber himſelf, carried in proviſions with his own hands, and would not let even Mrs. Read or any other ſervant ſee his wife, in private.

Between ſeven and eight o'clock, Kitty—who had been trying, as ſhe told me, to amuſe her mind a little by a turn in the garden, having had no reſt all night—came into the library, and ſaid, "The poſt chaiſe is at the door, I wonder whe-"ther Mr. Davers is going away in it."

Soon afterwards Davers came down ſtairs, followed by Mrs. Davers in tears who only ſaid, "Let me ſee my child, and my ſiſter; I will "ſolicit no other favour."

"Go into the parlour," replied he, in a ſurly tone, calling, at the ſame time, to the ſervant to bring little Lucy.

Kitty and her ſiſter flew into each others arms; the former was unable to utter a ſyllable.

Alarmed at her ſituation I ſtood ready to ſupport her.

"Farewel, ſiſter," ſaid Mrs. Davers, with her eyes ſwelled with tears, and looking like the

image of death, "let my follies—for I cannot "charge myſelf with any crimes—be warnings "to you; tho' indeed, your conduct, is irre-"proachable—yet, people with the beſt inten-"tions in the world may be drawn into errors," continued ſhe with a ſigh which prevented all farther utterance, while ſhe hung over her neck in ſilent ſorrow. Kitty could only ſay, "My "ſiſter, oh! my dear, dear ſiſter."

At that moment Biddy appeared with little Lucy. "Come, come," ſaid Davers, "make "haſte, for I cannot wait much longer."

Mrs. Davers immediately turned and caught the ſmiling infant, and watered its face with her tears. After having gazed at it for ſome moments, ſhe was going to give it to its maid, when, preſſing it ſtill cloſer to her breaſt, ſhe at laſt exclaimed, "Can I part for ever with my dear "child? This, this is miſery indeed——Oh! "Kitty, my ſiſter, be a mother to my darling. "*She* is innocent *now*, keep her always ſo, my "ſiſter, and may the God of mercy bleſs you "both."

She then embraced Kitty, who began, though unable to ſpeak intelligibly, to promiſe that ſhe would take care of her little neice, into whoſe arms her mother delivered her, and clapping her handkerchief to her eyes, hurried into the chaiſe, though ſhe appeared hardly able to walk.

As ſoon as the chaiſe drove away, Kitty, after having kiſſed the child, ſaid, "I will go home, "Mr. Shelburne, I cannot bear this houſe."

My

My heart died within me while ſhe ſpoke thoſe unwelcome words; and ſighs forced their way from my over-charged boſom.

Withdrawing the hand which I had taken, but not without firſt giving mine a gentle preſſure, ſhe added, "I thank you, Mr. Shelburne, "for all that you have done for us, but I cannot "thank you as I ought at preſent.—I muſt go "home."

"How ſhall I ſupport life without *you?*" ſaid I.

"You cannot but be ſenſible," replied ſhe, "that my father's houſe, after what has happen-"ed, is the propereſt place for me."

Dear, amiable girl! how very prudent ſhe is! what a treaſure will he enjoy who is happy enough to be united to her!—"Let me have the "pleaſure of conducting you ſafe home, then, "my Kitty: perhaps it will be the laſt I ſhall "ever receive; do not deny me *that.*"

She did not forbid me to accompany her, but deſired me to order a carriage for her, and aſked me if ſhe ſhould take the child with her. I told her, I thought it would be better for her to ſtay till ſhe heard from Davers.

"*I* cannot ſtay," anſwered ſhe; "but I be-"lieve you are right with regard to little Lucy, "for whom I will ſend as ſoon as I have conſulted "my mother. What a melancholy meeting "ſhall I have with my parents, Mr. Shelburne! "how will they grieve for their poor loſt child! "Never, never did I think ſhe would have ſwerv-

" ed from the precepts, and diſregarded the ad-
" monitions continually addreſſed to her."—She then left me, and went to prepare for her journey, while *I* gave myſelf up to deſpair.

She was ſoon ready, and wrote a little note after ſhe came down for Charles Oſwald, who had left Beechwood, to go to his father's, and from thence to London, from which place he ſaid he ſhould return hither in about a week. She ſhewed me what ſhe had written: ſhe gave it me, indeed, for her brother, and then roſe to depart. I caught her to my throbbing boſom, to bid her adieu, and embraced her with a tenderneſs which I did not endeavour to reſtrain; which ſhe permitted, while the tears fell from her lovely eyes on my face.—" Farewel, Mr. Shel-
" burne," ſaid ſhe, but in faultering accents, " I ſhall ever remember, with gratitude, your " regard for me."

I ſighed, but made no reply, and led her to the chaiſe. Seating myſelf by her in it, I endeavoured, by every art I was maſter of, to alleviate her ſorrow, and procure her every ſort of accommodation during our journey as we went poſt.

Juſt before we reached Mr. Oſwald's I ſaid to her, overwhelmed with the emotions which I felt at the thoughts of ſpeedily parting with her; " Muſt I never hope to ſee you again, Miſs " Oſwald? Muſt I never enjoy again thoſe bleſt " hours of unreſerved converſation which I re-
" member with ſo much delight?"

" Juſt

"Juſt now," replied ſhe, "I am too wretch-
"ed either to give or to receive any pleaſure of
"that kind. If ever my mind is more compoſed,
"if ever I am bleſt with happier hours, Mr.
"Shelburne will always be regarded by me as my
"beſt friend."

I preſſed her hand to my lips, lifted her out of the chaiſe, and looked after her with ſenſations not to be deſcribed, till ſhe was out of ſight. I then threw myſelf again into the chaiſe, more dead than alive.

I write this upon the road. I can do nothing but write, and talk about the dear girl on whom my ſoul doats.

I diſpatched your letter after Davers, but know not when he will receive it. Adieu.

LETTER LXVIII.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

SUCH a dreadful affair has happened! My ſiſter, unfortunate woman, has given Mr. Davers ſo much reaſon to ſuſpect her fidelity to him—though I hope ſhe has not really violated her marriage vows—that he has hurried her down to his eſtate in Northumberland. In conſequence of *that* proceeding I am come home: but oh! Nancy, you may imagine what my heart ſuffers for our dear Lucy. My father and mother are greatly alarmed, though I have tried to leſſen the ſhock which my intelligence, neceſſarily, gave them. I am, indeed, too much diſordered,

myſelf, to enter into particulars; I only write theſe few lines, becauſe I think you will be leſs hurt at hearing this diſagreeable news from the hand of your friend than from public report.

P. S. Mr. Shelburne, who brought me hither, is alſo, apparently, extremely unhappy — Do pray write to me. I never ſtood more in need of a friendly letter.

LETTER LXIX.

Mr. DAVERS to Mr. HEPBURNE.

Beechwood.

STRANGE things, my friend, have happened ſince you wrote to me. Your letter found me at my firſt night's ſtage, where, after a ſilent journey, Mrs. Davers declared herſelf to be very ill, and retired immediately to the apartment I had ordered for us with two beds in it. In that apartment I ſecured her while I ſupped, and then threw myſelf into the bed left ready for me. I did not ſleep a great deal. My companion too was very reſtleſs all night, and when I deſired her to get up and prepare for the continuance of her journey, ſhe replied, that ſhe was too much indiſpoſed to comply with my requeſt— but upon my replying in a peremptory ſtrain, ſhe ſighed and ſaid, "you ſhall be obeyed whatever "it coſts me." She was, I perceived, ſcarce able to dreſs herſelf, yet I thought ſhe deſerved to ſuffer for her folly, and, therefore, took no notice of what I ſaw, and what indeed excited

ſome

ſome compaſſion in me. I ordered the breakfaſt into our chamber as ſoon as ſhe was ready, but ſhe would not take the leaſt refreſhment, ſaying, that ſhe could not ſwallow a bit, nor drink a drop of any thing. We got onward, however, and the laſt time we changed horſes before dinner, ſhe aſked for a glaſs of water: I offered her every thing which the houſe afforded to eat or to drink, but all my offers were anſwered with refuſals. At dinner ſhe was in the ſame refuſing way, deſiring to go into a chamber, and to lie down. I dined in the room with her, fancying that ſhe had formed a ſcheme to eſcape. With great difficulty I ſeated her again in the chaiſe. She even leaned againſt the ſide of it as if ſhe was not able to ſit upright. I rounded in my corner to give her as much eaſe as I could, for ſhe looked exceedingly pale and weak. Whether *your* perſuaſions to uſe lenity, or the remains of former paſſion were moſt powerful, I cannot determine, but they both operated upon me in ſuch a manner that, though I believed I had been extremely ill uſed, I *felt* for her, as ſhe ſeemed, whenever I caſt a look at her, to be really incapable of attending to any thing—ſhe, at laſt, ſunk down, almoſt off her ſeat. This alarmed me—I went immediately to raiſe her: but when I touched her ſhe was as cold as if ſhe was dead, notwithſtanding the remarkable heat of the weather. I was prodigiouſly ſhocked. I lifted her up to replace her in her ſeat—ſhe then opened her eyes, which had been, for ſome time, ſhut: thoſe

eyes, lately ſo brilliant, now appeared as if they would be ſoon cloſed for ever. I trembled exceſſively, Hepburne—ſhe faintly cried, "I cannot "ſit upright—I ſhall never ſit up again.—For "God's ſake, Mr. Davers, pardon me, for I "believe I am dying."

"Heaven forbid," replied I, with a faultering voice, fearing that ſhe had ſpoken the truth.—Oh! Hepburne! till that terrifying moment, I knew not how much I ſtill loved her. I raiſed her gently in my arms, but ſhe ſunk down again: her head reſted on my knees, and while my hands were buſied in aſſiſting her, ſhe preſſed them with her cold lips ſeveral times, as often exclaiming, but in feeble accents, "Indeed, indeed, I "never wronged you: I have been fooliſh, but "not criminal.—Oh! forgive me, before it is "too late."

Melted to the ſoul by this return of tenderneſs, and exceedingly frightened leſt ſhe ſhould really be dying, I haſtily replied, "I do, I do forgive "you:—be comforted: I will ſtop the chaiſe, "and will try to procure ſome aſſiſtance."

"Your pardon, your returning regard for me "is ſufficient," anſwered ſhe, ſtill graſping my knees while I called to the drivers to ſtop, and ordered one of my ſervants on horſeback to gallop full ſpeed to the firſt houſe, and to bring a cordial, and ſome kind of refreſhment for his Lady, who was very ill. I then again endeavoured to raiſe her on her ſeat, on which ſhe ſtrove to keep herſelf. I placed her head on my boſom, to

which

which ſhe preſſed her lips, as my ſhirt was open. Then, lifting up her languid eyes ſhe cried, while a faint colour juſt tinged her cheek, "Par-"don me for taking this liberty: I have no other "way to ſhew my love, and my gratitude for "your care of me."

Was it poſſible for humanity to be ſteeled againſt ſuch ſubmiſſive tenderneſs?—I could not be proof againſt it. I ſtrained her cloſe to my heart, and kiſſed her eyes and lips till I found them glow with returning life. Theſe redoubled ſigns of my love and of my forgiveneſs reſtored her in ſome meaſure, and the poor dear creature ſtrove to thank me, but could neither find words to expreſs her feelings, nor articulate them. She only graſped my hands, and looked up to me with undiſſembled affection—ſhe was ſtill extremely faint, and her hands were ſo cold, that I put them into my boſom to warm them. Then laying my face to hers I deſired her to try to compoſe herſelf till I got ſome relief for her, having bade the fellows drive ſlowly on. She could not think of reſt, ſhe told me, till ſhe had convinced me, if poſſible, that ſhe was not ſo guilty as ſhe had appeared to be. As I ſaw that ſhe was hardly capable of talking, I inſiſted upon her being quiet, but the dear girl was ſo affected by my revived tenderneſs (a revival which ſhe never—ſhe afterwards declared—expected) that ſhe could not forbear diſcovering, by ſeveral kind looks, and ſtriking actions, whenever her eyes met mine, how much ſhe enjoyed it. My

heart

heart was, I confeſs, ſo ſoftened by her affecting behaviour, that I was, naturally, inſenſibly led to redouble my endearments, and ſhe returned them with a delicacy, with an ardour at the ſame time, which made me abſolutely adore her. You may imagine then I was half diſtracted to find that ſhe did not recover ſo faſt as I wiſhed: I aſked her if the motion of the chaiſe gave her any uneaſineſs, and if ſhe could bear a little quicker travelling.

"As you pleaſe," replied ſhe, "I am happy "in your care of me, and nothing, as I am at "preſent ſituated, can diſturb me."

"It is only," ſaid I, "to procure ſome re-"freſhment for you, my deareſt, that I wiſh to "hurry the horſes."

"I want nothing," replied ſhe, reclining her head again upon my boſom.

Soon afterwards John came back with a bottle of cordial which he had received from an hoſpitable lady, who lived about a mile off. I urged her ſtrongly to ſip a little of it, and poured it into a cup; ſhe ſwallowed but a few drops, yet I thought they revived her.

As ſoon as we arrived at the inn at which we were to put up, I called the miſtreſs of the houſe, and deſired her to attend my wife, and ſee her in a warm bed. She left me with reluctance, even to take a repoſe which was evidently neceſſary for her.

When Mrs. Gooch came from her, I went up and ſat by her bedſide all night, regardleſs of all

ſhe

ſhe could ſay to oppoſe me, giving her ſomething warm and deluting to drink every half hour, which ſhe accepted from me with ſo tender a gratitude that I was altogether ſatisfied with what I did for her.

"How could I leave you?" ſaid ſhe every now and then, with eyes, and with a voice which ſufficiently denoted the ſincerity of her ſorrow for having offended me, "How could I, a mo-"ment, be diſpleaſed with you?"

On my going to feel her forehead, which glowed as much from the agitation of her mind as from her bodily ſufferings, ſhe removed my hand, endeavouring, at the ſame time, to hide her face with the bed-cloaths, crying, "I am "aſhamed to think that ever I vexed you: I do "not deſerve ſo much indulgence; yet, indeed, "I never injured you, deſignedly."

I deſired her to ſay no more about it, but to try to ſleep; ſhe frequently, however, roſe up in her bed, and began to make ſome apology for her conduct which I poſitively refuſed to hear, becauſe I found that her efforts to exculpate herſelf fluttered her ſpirits too much. I gained my point at laſt. She grew better before the phyſician whom I had ſent for, arrived. In two days, during which we remained at the inn, ſhe was able to bear the journey hither. I have never made the leaſt mention of any paſt tranſactions; for the ſlighteſt alluſion to them, I found rendered her very ſerious, nay dejected; ſighs burſt perpetually from her overcharged boſom, and whenever

whenever I took her hand, or kiſſed her, tears dropped from her eyes, ſo that while I was abſolutely enchanted by the manner in which ſhe returned my endearments, I feared that there was ſtill ſome remains of an inclination for Hythe lurking in her heart, and that ſhe only diſſembled to deceive me. Rouzed by that idea, I was, more than once, I own, ready to blame myſelf for having ſo eaſily forgiven her, and to accuſe myſelf of a weakneſs which made me, almoſt, contemptible in my own eyes—But how very much did I wrong the poor girl!

The afternoon before we began our journey, while I was ſitting in her chamber, I took up a book which lay in the window. She came and threw herſelf on her knees before me, and gently ſeizing my hands, ſaid, when ſhe had kiſſed them, "Let me entreat you now, my dear Mr. "Davers to hear me—I cannot go home, I do "not deſerve your returning affection till I have "fully cleared myſelf. I have been extremely "indiſcreet, yet never intentionally ſo, nor ſhould "I ever have beſtowed a thought upon Lord "Hythe had he not been ſo very aſſiduous to pleaſe "me, and to furniſh amuſement for me during "thoſe hours when I was truly miſerable becauſe "deprived of your ſociety. I looked upon my-"ſelf as obliged to him, and imagined that I "owed him ſome acknowledgments for the ef-"forts he made to divert me. Yet my intenti-"ons were quite innocent: I was only actuated "by gratitude: but that gratitude carried me

"too

"too far, tho' it never drove me to criminal "lengths. When you returned to Beechwood "I determined to keep up a little ſhew of reſent- "ment, becauſe I thought ſuch a determination "laudable at the time, but I am now convinced "that my carriage in conſequence of it was im- "prudent—it diſguſted you and you again ne- "gleƈted me: by negleƈting me you increaſed "my ill-humour, and as Lord Hythe, at that "moment, repeated his endeavours to let me ſee "how much he preferred me to every other wo- "man, I was fooliſhly flattered by his particular "*attentions*, and as fooliſhly glad to ſecure the "heart of *one man* at leaſt. I will confeſs that "I gave him encouragement, but never were *my* "encouragements equal to *your* apprehenſions: "and as to the kiſs of which you accuſed me, "it was meerly accidental: I never had permit- "ted ſuch a freedom, but as Lord Hythe ſat "very near me when I happened to let fall my "pencil, and ſtooped for it, both our hands met, "and he took advantage of an opportunity which "I never ſhould have given him. By coming "in at that inſtant you entertained, and, appa- "rently, not without reaſon, injurious ſuſpici- "ons; ſuſpicions which I had not merited: yet, "I will make no concealments from you: tho' I "allowed his lordſhip no improper freedoms, I "liſtened but too attentively to the many tender "complaints which he poured out, on my having "diſpoſed of my heart before he became acquaint- "ed with it: and when you left us, for ſo many

"weeks

"weeks together, I ſecretly ſighed—imagining "indeed, that your inclination led you, when-"ever you abſented yourſelf from me, to other "women—I ſecretly ſighed becauſe your be-"haviour was not as affectionate as Lord "Hythe's. *That* behaviour made me the more "inclined at length to pity him, as I believed he "really eſteemed me, eſpecially when you deſir-"ed him to leave Beechwood. Your requeſt, "he told me, would certainly have produced a "quarrel between you, had not I, exceſſively "alarmed with the moſt diſtracting fears, in-"treated him not to diſcover any ſigns of reſent-"ment. But I could not prevail on him to ſtifle "his reſentment till I had conſented to ſee him "ſometimes at the place he had pitched upon. "Unable to carry my point without making ſo "indiſcreet a conceſſion, I granted his requeſt, "but, with reluctance. I was conſcious of my "indiſcretion, but my terrors, and, I will ho-"neſtly add, a fooliſh propenſity to retain a heart "which was, I fancied, ſincerely attached to "*me* alone, prompted me to act as I did. I pre-"ſume not to deſerve your pardon; but by the "propriety of my future life, I will moſt ſtudi-"ouſly endeavour to atone for my paſt follies: "happy ſhall I be if my endeavours reſtore me "to your favour, inexpreſſibly *un*happy muſt I "ever be if they prove unſucceſsful. My eyes "were not thoroughly opened: I did not ſee "plainly the precipice to which I was raſhly "haſtening, till I perceived that you were ſo fu-

"rioufly

" rioufly incenfed againft me; till I perceived " that you had refolved to cut me off entirely " from your company, to withdraw from me to- " tally your affection. I could not bear the " thoughts of being abfolutely abandoned by you, " and when I found that I was to be for ever re- " moved from your preſence; when I found that " I was to be ſhut up from the world, I then " felt, at the ſame time, that I loved you too " well to be able to endure the load of life in a " ſtate of ſeparation."

Here ſhe ſtopped, her ſtrength and ſpirits were ſo much exhauſted that ſhe could not proceed. Devouring every word and look, which were in the higheſt degree expreſſive, I raiſed her to life, to love, in my fond arms. We ſet out the next morning, and arrived at this place after a very agreeable journey; during which I was conde- ſcending enough to make ſome excuſes for *my* wanderings which, I verily believe, firſt occaſi- oned Hythe to attempt to inſinuate himſelf into her favour, and firſt induced *her* to liſten to his dangerous converſation. I now heartily ſubſcribe to what you and Shelburne have often told me. " If *we* lead the way to miſchief, the women " will certainly follow us."

I found Shelburne, waiting for my return, as miſerable as you can imagine a lover to be, at Kitty's abſence; but I brought him *ſome* con- ſolation which he very little expected: for within ten miles of my own houſe we met Charles Of-

" wald

wald going to his father's, by whom Lucy and I ſent our earneſt deſires to ſee Kitty here again as ſoon as poſſible. Charles is flying about to get things ready for his marriage with lady Juliet, about which he is in prodigious ſpirits. I wiſh it may anſwer his expectations. I have no great notion of her ladyſhip's purſuing the plan which ſhe has formed. She propoſes, it ſeems, to live with the ſtricteſt œconomy, in order to make amends for the forfeiture of her jointure in conſequence of her ſecond marriage. Love, indeed, may do wonders, even in a woman. Charles is a handſome fellow; he has ſomething of both his ſiſters about him; and therefore what influence his perſon and mind may have upon her, may be eaſily conceived.

LETTER LXX.

Mr. SHELBURNE to Mr. HEPBURNE.

KITTY, Kitty has promiſed to be mine—I am almoſt mad with joy—I cannot write three ſyllables more of ſenſe—pray make allowances for the tranſporting ſituation of

Your intoxicated friend,

C. S.

LETTER LXXI.

From the Same to the Same.

Beechwood.

I Am a little recovered from the delirium of joy, but my raptures will laſt to the end of my life—yet, what have I not ſuffered.

You

You are, I imagine, by this time acquainted with the perfect reconciliation between Mr. and Mrs. Davers—Now, therefore, to my own affairs. After having remained here, at Kitty's requeſt, without making one effort to viſit her at her father's, becauſe I would not be too troubleſome a lover, tho' I puniſhed myſelf conſiderably, by keeping cloſe to this ſpot; after having remained here till my patience was almoſt exhauſted, Davers appeared with his Lucy, the ſight of whom gave me great pleaſure, but the hurry I was in to fly to my Kitty, and to inform her of ſo happy an event, is not to be deſcribed —Davers immediately checked my impetuoſity by telling me that he had met Oſwald going to his father's who had promiſed to bring her back with him: I therefore endeavoured to compoſe myſelf as much as poſſible till ſhe made her appearance, but my eagerneſs to ſee her was ſo great, and I was ſo extremely diſquieted, leſt any thing ſhould happen to prevent her arrival, that I believe my friends wiſhed me a thouſand miles off.

Sitting in the window which faced the road, towards which my eyes had been directed all day, I ſaw, at laſt, a chaiſe and four advancing very faſt, as it came nearer I knew it to be Lord Hythe's. After what had happened the ſight of his lordſhip's carriage a little ſurpriſed me: but gueſs my great aſtoniſhment and agitation when I ſaw him jump from it and hand out Miſs Oſwald. You cannot conceive my emotions—no man

man who has not been as desperately in love as I am, *can* conceive them—I was almost incapable of supporting myself upon my legs: I felt myself just ready to expire, till I saw his lordship get into his chaise again, and saw Kitty run to the door while *his* servant followed with a trunk box, which I was well assured, belonged to her. I was still however, puzzled at her appearance—yet, I was pleased at the sight of her. With a smile upon her face she approached me while I hurried to her—she gave me her hand which also helped to recover my spirits a little—I pressed it tenderly. "Welcome to Beechwood, dear "Miss Oswald," said I. "But how came "Lord Hythe to have the honour of escorting "you?" My impatience to have this enigma explained was inexpressible.

"Oh! I have a long story to tell you," replied she, "but I will only just give you the "heads of it because I see you wish to be in-"formed."

"I do indeed," answered I eagerly, "for I "expected you to come with your brother."

"Ay—but Charles was not ready, and I "longed to see my sister."

"And nobody else?" replied I, with a sigh which I could not suppress—"Happy, happy "sister! How I envy Mrs. Davers!"

She only answered with a complacent smile. "I have been almost frighted to death," said she, sitting down, "don't I look pale?"

"You

"You have looked pale a great while," ſaid I, with a tender concern. "But what has hap-"pened? ſurely Lord Hythe has not been in-"ſolent?"

"So far from being inſolent he has almoſt "ſaved my life, I believe."

I ſtarted—I looked—as I felt—extremely diſ-turbed—"While I was croſſing Finchley Com-"mon," continued ſhe, "in my father's chaiſe, "a man rode up to the boy and bade him ſtop, "and on his refuſing to obey him, fired: the "boy fell at that inſtant: however, before the "villain could reach the window of the chaiſe "Lord Hythe's ſervants rode up, and he gal-"loped off. His lordſhip quitted his carriage, "and, upon ſeeing me in the greateſt conſterna-"nation, offered me his aſſiſtance, adding, that "he thought himſelf happy in having directed "his people to return to town the ſame way I "happened to be going. He then begged me to "get into *his* chaiſe, as the poor lad who drove "mine was, tho' not dangerouſly wounded, ren-"dered incapable of driving, and told me he "would order his man to take care of him. I "knew not what to do," continued the ſweet girl—looking at me as if ſhe feared that I ſhould not approve of her conduct—I ſaid nothing: my mind was too much agitated—ſhe went on in the following manner: "My Lord aſſiſted me in "getting out of my own chaiſe into his, and told "me that he would ſet me down ſafe at Beech-

"wood,

" wood, I appeared, I believe, to be a little ſur-
" prized, but as I could not think of any other
" way of coming hither, I conſented, and—"

Here ſhe ceaſed threw down her eyes, and ſeemed to be diſconcerted.

" And what?" cried I, eagerly—" and what?"

" My Lord," replied ſhe, lifting up her eyes again, while a charming glow animated her complexion, " took this opportunity to make
" me an offer of himſelf and his fortune."

Heavens! what did I feel at that moment! my very ſoul ſhrunk within me: I could but juſt ſay with trembling lips, and in a feeble voice, " And ſo you accepted of him?"

So impatient was I for a reply, tho' I could only expect one which would doom me to perpetual miſery, that I held my breath leſt I ſhould not hear my fate pronounced diſtinctly: my eyes were ſtill rivetted on her, tho' I did not ſeem to ſee clearly.

" And can you have ſo mean an opinion of me, Mr. Shelburne," replied ſhe, with the moſt charming accents, " as to think I ſhould accept
" of a man who has behaved ſo improperly to my
" ſiſter?"

She ſtopped—I recovered my ſenſes, inſtantly, yet, ſtill doubtful whether I had heard right, or whether indeed I was capable of hearing at all, I replied, " Could you refuſe him? When we are
" partial to any particular perſons we are apt to
" forget their follies, or to overlook them."

" I am

"I am not one of thoſe people," anſwered the dear girl, bluſhing; "and, after what has "paſſed, I never will marry Lord Hythe."

How rich a cordial to my damped ſpirits was this enlivening declaration! I could have devoured her for it: I alſo fancied that ſhe looked at me juſt then with uncommon ſatisfaction: I don't know how I came to think ſo, nor how I ventured upon the queſtion which I ſtarted, but I did, tho' dreadfully apprehenſive of a refuſal, I *did* ſay, with tremulous accents indeed, "Since "your inclinations are no longer engaged, Miſs "Oſwald——"

Here I pauſed, afraid to proceed—yet, wild to know even the worſt that could be known, and endeavouring to dive into her moſt ſecret thoughts by a cloſe examination of her eyes, which were rooted to the floor, I thus went on, "Since then your heart is now in your own diſpo- "ſal, may I hope to be, one day, bleſſed with "your hand?"

At the concluſion of theſe words I felt as if I had committed a capital crime. I wiſhed to recall my words, this moment; I was glad I had delivered them, the next.

She immediately raiſed me from doubt to certainty: ſhe baniſhed deſpair, and inſpired delight: ſhe filled me with felicity almoſt too exquiſite to be borne by ſaying, "I ever thought myſelf ex- "ceedingly obliged to Mr. Shelburne for his re- "gard for me: there is, indeed, no man whom

"I ſo

"I ſo much eſteem; yet I cannot pretend to feel "for him in every reſpect as he, perhaps, does "for me; but if he will accept of me as I am, "time may make me all that he wiſhes me to be."

Imagine my ſenſations, Hepburne—conceive them, for they are not to be expreſſed—when theſe words flowed from her delicious lips. Her ſpeech was ſufficiently animating, but I was quite tranſported with the frankneſs with which ſhe uttered it—Her voice, her manner was really enchanting.

Catching her hand, and preſſing it to my boſom, I could only ſay, "Accept of you, Miſs "Oſwald?" I ſunk back in my chair.

She ſaw my diſorder, and, running to the ſideboard, brought me a glaſs of water: I took it, but my mind was ſo confuſed that I could not hold it; it fell from my hand.—She ſtood looking at me with a concern which penetrated my ſoul.

"What can I do for you?" cried ſhe, in an affectionate tone.

"Nothing," replied I, laying her hand to my lips with an ardent preſſure; "nothing: be ever "thus kind; be ever thus condeſcending, and I "ſhall be bleſt indeed."

She then ſat down by me, and ſuffered me to preſs her to my doating heart, to thank her with a thouſand warm careſſes inſtead of grateful words, which it was not in my power to articulate. At length, ſhe deſired me to go with her

to

to her ſiſter. I was loth to part with her, I was loth to diſengage myſelf from her lovely perſon; but her every requeſt ſhall be always complied with. To make me ſome amends the dear girl took hold of my arm while we walked, and ſtrove, by numberleſs little winning ways, to make me ſenſible that I was not near ſo indifferent to her as I had believed myſelf to be.—But I hear her ſweet voice—I muſt lay down my pen—O Hepburne! with ſuch a companion for life I muſt ſurely be ſupremely bleſt.

LETTER LXXII.

Miſs OSWALD to Miſs ALLENSON.

Beechwood.

I HAVE a great deal to ſay, my dear Nancy, but I have a very little time to ſay it in. I have, within theſe two days, acted in a manner to merit my own approbation, and I am rather vain upon the occaſion. I have made the amiable Shelburne happy by conſenting to be *his*: he was almoſt overpowered with the joy which I gave him. But I ought firſt to tell you that my dear Lucy is entirely reſtored to Mr. Davers's affection. I want words to expreſs the pleaſure which I feel on their reconciliation. I muſt now tell you that I fell accidentally into Lord Hythe's way. He ſaved me from being robbed by a highwayman, by whom the boy who drove me was wounded. I was therefore obliged to

let his Lordſhip remove me out of my own chaiſe into his. He treated me with a deference and a reſpect which could not but be agreeable. What will you ſaw when I inform you that he offered to throw himſelf and his fortune at my feet? He aſſured me that, though he had, for a time, preferred my ſiſter, there had not been the ſlighteſt intercourſe between them of an improper kind; and added, that, as he was perfectly convinced of the folly of his behaviour to her, as he flattered himſelf that I would not condemn him for attaching himſelf to one ſo dear to me as he knew my ſiſter was, and as he loved no woman in the world except myſelf, he hoped I would be condeſcending enough to forget his faults, and to receive his addreſſes.

My heart was ſtrangely fluttered—I felt myſelf in a very aukward ſituation—embarraſſed to a degree. Lord Hythe had ever in my opinion, ſomething ſtrongly prepoſſeſſing in his perſon, and his manners, but when I reflected upon what I owed my ſiſter, Mr. Shelburne, and even myſelf, I recovered my ſpirits. I thanked him for the compliment he paid me, but aſſured him in my turn that I could not poſſibly think of a man who had attempted to alienate the affections of a married woman from her huſband.

He ſaid a great deal in his defence: I was, however, determined to reject him. He then changed his behaviour, and treated me with a

kind

kind of diſtant reſpect, which continued till he ſat me down here. Mr. Shelburne met me with a countenance ſo pale, and looked ſo dejected, that I felt for him, and haſtened to relieve him by relating all that had happened to me. I watched every alteration in his features in the different parts of my little narrative, which thoroughly convinced me of his extreme affection for me. Encouraged by what I had diſcloſed, he earneſtly urged me to make him compleatly happy by giving him my hand. I ready agreed, my dear, to comply with his earneſt requeſt. He was ſo much tranſported at my anſwer, ſo unexpectedly favourable to him, that he was juſt on the point of ſinking under his joyful ſenſations. I ſaid and did every thing in my power to reſtore tranquillity to his mind, and to aſſure him of my affectionate eſteem; *more* I could not, honeſtly, promiſe him. He is now leſs and leſs agitated, and I begin to diſcover graces in his perſon which I had never obſerved before. He perceives my attention to him with exceſſive pleaſure, and the more tranſported he is with my carriage to him, the more amiable does he make himſelf appear in my eyes.

My ſiſter has entirely convinced her huſband of her innocence, and by ſtudying to pleaſe him in every ſhape has occaſioned a renewal of his affection for her. I am extremely happy by ſeeing *them* ſo.

My

My brother Charles will ſoon be united to Lady Juliet, ſo that every thing at preſent has a ſmiling aſpect. I am only apprehenſive of the tattle of the town about the late buſtle in our family. All eyes will, I fear, be upon us when we firſt appear in public: however, I hope that ſome of the *ſtarers* in the married world will be thrown into a train of proper reflections, while they are laughing at Mr. and Mrs. Davers. Let the modern huſband conſider that *inconſtancy*, on *his* ſide, may drive the woman who is united to him into indiſcretions to which ſhe is not naturally addicted. Let the *modern wife* alſo conſider that *her* infidelities can never be defended by the example of her huſband.

FINIS.

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